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FOCH SPEAKS

TRANSLATED BY RUSSELL GREEN

FOCH SPEAKS

by MAJOR CHARLES BUGNET

Aide-de-Camp to Marshal Foch

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LINCOLN MAC VEAGH
THE DIAL PRESS · NEW YORK
LONGMANS, GREEN & COMPANY, TORONTO

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Published June 3, 1929
Reprinted June 5, 1929

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

In this book the author has made a serious attempt to expound the moral lesson which he derived from eight years' association with the Marshal, during which he shared with him the intimacy of daily life.

Thus this work is a portrait of Marshal Foch as seen and understood by his aide-de-camp.

The book was composed during that association, but quite independently of the Marshal. The latter knew what was being done, but death prevented him from taking cognisance of the final result. Further, he did not wish any passage of it to be published during his lifetime, to avoid the possible suggestion that it had been dictated.

This study of Marshal Foch is, therefore, a testimony, for which the author alone is responsible. It attempts to reveal the man in the leader of men, and to show how the application of a sound method by a strong character led to victory.

Throughout the book, Marshal Foch's own words are printed in italics.

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"WHAT IS THE REAL QUESTION?"[1]

[1] "De quoi s'agit-il?" was a favourite phrase of Marshal Foch.

"PUT ON YOUR SLIPPERS"

31st May, 1921.

Marshal Foch? What sort of man is he?

Although for the past eighteen months I have been on his staff, I have not often come into contact with him. Only a single meeting secured me an interview of a few minutes' duration, of which I preserve the remembrance as a revelation. He was returning to his quarters in a car. I was standing on the threshold of the door, and I saluted. He stopped his car and signed to me to approach. His kindly manner quickly put me at ease. After a few casual phrases and questions, he spoke of my father's career, and of my wound. . . . And so it has come about that, as one of his two aides-de-camp has been posted to the Staff College, I have been invited to succeed him and required to take up duty at once.

What will the actual contact be like? As a chief, the Marshal is not reputed to be of easy disposition. I have been told: "He does not like to waste his time and avoids irrelevant conversation. You have to grasp his meaning at once, attend to what he says and does. You can analyse his words, his gestures, even his silences. All have a meaning, without

alternative expression, and beyond conjecture. If he puts questions—and sometimes they are surprising, for he does not hide the mechanism of his thoughts—you must reply instantly with clearness and accuracy."

General Desticker, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, under whose direct orders I had been till then, also gave me instruction and advice on this point. "When the Marshal has difficulty in expressing himself, when he is in a temper, he lets slip some rather strong phrase, which acts as a safety-valve. But he is really very good-hearted." So there I was, warned, but not reassured!

Then I enter the Marshal's room. He is in mufti, sitting in an armchair, near to his desk, with a sheaf of foreign Press reports on his knee, which he is turning over.

"*Ah! There you are!*"

"Yes, sir, I should like . . ."

"*Good! You are to be my aide-de-camp! Well, consult your colleague Lhopital, who already knows all the ropes. After that, we will see. There are duties which take up considerable time, and also correspondence. Make your arrangements with him.*"

"Thank you, sir!"

"*Yes, exactly! Go and put your slippers on!*"

He dismisses me with a gesture, and returns to his reading. After all, why should he ask me any

questions? He knew all about me before appointing me. His decision was fixed. He knew what he was doing. There was no point, therefore, in asking me anything. The time for that had gone by. All the same, I feel a slight sense of disappointment. I have accepted without a word, without launching the complimentary remarks I had all ready; such as the honour of the appointment, the pleasure of serving him, my devotion and so on. . . . He dislikes chatter! Certainly he counts on my devotion. It is superfluous to assure him of it; it is my duty to prove it to him. It is by my work that he will judge me, not by my promise. He is right. And, besides, this interview, so full of importance in my eyes, can hardly have any in his. I analyse this swift scene. . . . The end has a little disconcerted me. "*Put on your slippers!*" What did he mean? Precisely what the situation is . . . namely, the War is finished . . . we are working in offices . . . no more long rides, therefore no more spurs, no more stirrups. No more question of "turning up one's toes" [1] nor of girding on the sword . . . !

I should have liked those who accuse him of imperialism to have heard him. We are not on the point of returning to the scene of operations. With what humour he displayed at once his genius for pungent summary and his sense of realities.

[1] "*Graisser ses bottes*"—lit. "grease one's boots"—is slang for "die." The double sense defies translation.

My surprise arises from the eclipse of my anticipations. All my fancied knowledge of the Marshal is nothing compared to what I am going to learn about him—so forcible seems his personality, so unwavering his will, so original and characteristic the ebullition by which he at once reveals and conceals his latent ardour!

But I was reassured by something I read. In the account which Méneval has left of his first encounter with Bonaparte I was gratified to come upon the following passage: "I was announced and at once shown into a room where I saw the First Consul sitting before a desk. A candlestick with three branches, backed by a reflector, shed a dazzling light over this desk; over the rest of the room brooded a twilight which struggled against the glow thrown forth by the fire blazing on the hearth. The First Consul turned his back upon me and was busy reading a document, whose perusal he completed without paying attention to my entry. Then he turned towards me without leaving his chair. I had been standing still near to the door of his room. I went towards him. He threw at me a piercing glance which would have profoundly disconcerted me if I had been seeing it for the first time; then he said that he wished to appoint me to his secretariat, and asked me if I was competent to undertake the task which he wished to entrust to me.

"With some embarrassment I returned the usual hackneyed phrases; that I was diffident as to my capacities, but that I would put forward my utmost efforts to justify the confidence he placed in me. He did not seem displeased with my reply, for he rose and came towards me with a somewhat sardonic smile, and pulled my ear, an action which I knew was with him a mark of favour. Then he said to me, 'Very well, return to-morrow at seven in the morning and come straight in here.' There ended the examination I underwent on my admission to that sanctuary from which, I fancied, should have emerged nothing less than invisible oracles, surrounded by thunder and lightning."

"ONE MUST SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE"

Men sometimes arise whose names are suddenly carried by events to the four corners of the world. All the echoes of the universe vie in repeating them. And yet, considering the bearer of such a name, one hardly knows what brought him fame. As for the "actual nuances of his character, his intimate qualities, the natural disposition of his personality," [1] that is where Legend steps in. . . .

The Great War had just finished. Over the memory of those last months soars one of these names, which was murmured like a prayer in the agony of disaster, and sung like a hymn of thanksgiving amid the joy of victory: FOCH.

By the magnitude of the cause which he defended, of the responsibility which he bore and of the victory which he won, by the strength of his character in the great ordeal and the ascendancy of his genius in the conduct of the campaign, the Marshal commands respect and extorts admiration. His renown, his glory, are such that he no longer belongs only to the sphere of our national life, but

[1] Preface to the *St. Helena Memoirs*. Las Cases says of the Emperor: "The universe is filled with his glory, but no one knows the actual nuances of his character, his intimate qualities, the natural disposition of his personality."

henceforth forms part of the inheritance of humanity. Nothing, therefore, that concerns him can be regarded with indifference.

And yet, what does the world know of him?

Amid the uproar of battles, the victor is considered only as an emblem of Mars. It was the time for deeds. Only results mattered; above all, those which established a landmark, which marked a step towards the climax of the drama. All those which the *Generalissimo* achieved were carefully recorded. The man himself was seen only as a martial entity.

Born at Tarbes on the second of October, 1851, he joined the army for the period of the war in 1870, but the armistice arrived before he could take part in the struggle. Entered at the École Polytechnique some months later, he passed out as artillery officer. In 1885, as a captain, he entered the Staff College in Paris. After an appointment on the General Staff, he returned to the Staff College as Professor of Strategy, in which capacity he delivered the famous series of lectures which were collected and published under the titles *Principles of War* and *The Conduct of War*. After holding command of an artillery regiment at Vannes, he was promoted to general rank, and returned once more to the Staff College, this time as Commandant. He was then entrusted with a Division, and soon afterwards with an Army Corps. In 1914 he commanded the Army Corps at Nancy.

During four years of war he was destined to bring into play his military science and to fill the highest commands. At the battle of the Marne he led the 9th Army, which distinguished itself in the marshes of Saint-Gond. Appointed as deputy to General Joffre, he co-ordinated the operations of the French northern armies, bore the brunt of the German attack on the Yser, and directed the operations in Artois, then the battle of the Somme. Before his next action in commanding at Senlis, he directed an investigation into very important questions of inter-Allied co-operation. As Chief of the General Staff he planned and organised the intervention of Italy. As president of the executive committee of the Supreme Command he was placed in charge of the general reserve. Finally, in March 1918 he was appointed to co-ordinate the operations of the Allied armies, and in that position, as *Generalissimo*, he forced back the invader across our frontiers.

Now that the disappearance of that menace leaves us a little calm, our curiosity is awakened and demands fuller information.

How was his will hardened? What deep sources of strength carried him along? What preoccupations haunted him? What dark anguishes shook his spirit? Had any of them the power to overthrow him? Whence came his sterling common sense? What did he do to sustain and develop it? How did

he cultivate his intelligence? And those terrible responsibilities which he undertook, with what moral resources was he able to bear them without weakening? Did he make any mistakes? Did he enjoy storm and stress? What were his methods? Are they within our grasp?

Behind all these questions, however one puts them, however one looks at them, one comes back always to the War. It is the War which is their cause, their explanation, their overwhelming background. It is the War, too, which underlines their answers. How could it be otherwise?

When the eagle has reached its lonely peak and folded its wings it still conjures up a vision of the spaces which its flight has covered. It is not in vain that the Marshal has saved us by his victory. He remains the victor, and, whatever we look for in him, it is always the victor whom we meet.

Though, in the midst of all his glory, he seems to us inaccessible, there still remains in him the man whom we do not know and who would be nearer to us if we felt him living like us, suffering the hardships which we endure, fighting against difficulties like our own—that is, struggling against himself. Let this hero assume the guise of common humanity, so that we may understand him better, study his example, and follow him. Undoubtedly, his influence deserves to spread itself more widely. The worth of his principles, the soundness of his

teaching, the certainty of his method, can serve as models; so infallibly did they add loftiness to his thought, cogency to his reasoning, and confidence to his indomitable energy. Obviously, it might seem that his range of information must be limited to the rules of tactics and strategy. Such an interpretation of the leader of armies, remarkable though it would be, is not sufficient. It would appeal only to specialists in the art of war, and would indeed need specialists to expound it. There is another aspect, one of a wider interest—that of the chief who has known how to command himself, and to succeed by his work and by his force of will in raising himself to the front rank—that of the man whose personality makes its mark by his own achievement. Now that the Marshal has put off his armour, we can approach him. The Allied Governments entrusted him with the presidency of the Allied Military Committee of Versailles, with the duty of ensuring the execution of the military clauses of the Peace Treaty. Thenceforth he is relegated to the quotidian intimacy of office life, with its trivial occurrences, its conversations, its exchange of recollections, its revelation of character, its unimportant details. All that is not so impressive as the great hours of stirring action, but: "*one must see things as they are, look at the thing-in-itself, in the actual conditions in which it occurs, within the framework of the particular case which*

qualifies the situation." And, besides, are not those conditions more favourable to the analysis of character—that "fountain whence flow our actions drop by drop"?

What it does concern us to know, is the tastes, the habits, even the eccentricities of the Marshal, his tendencies and his affections, his oddities and his weaknesses, the structure of his mind and of his judgment, his methods of work and of thought, his whole interior life, the foundation of his knowledge, the reasons for his opinions, the springs of his activity, the substance of his intelligence, the flowers of his secret garden. Let us follow his own advice: "*As with a house, so it is with people—to see what they are worth one must survey them from all sides.*"

"COME TO MY OFFICE; I AM THERE ALL THE TIME"

Having received from the Government the use of the Hôtel de la Rue de Grenelle, which formally served as residence of the Chief of the General Staff, now appointed *Generalissimo* of the French Armies, when the question arose of finding an establishment for the Allied Military Committee of Versailles, the Marshal decided to install his offices in one of the annexes of the Invalides. "*It is nearer; we shall lose no time.*"

It was Louis XIV who gave his assent to an architectural ensemble reminiscent of the front view of St. Peter's in Rome to surround the crescent before the Hôtel des Invalides, at the foot of the Dôme. Two long circular galleries, in the style of porticoes, run into two pavilions. But under the ministry of d'Argenson were constructed the plain and low-lying buildings which actually flank it and do not conceal it from view. In the buildings at the corner of the Boulevard des Invalides and of the Avenue de Tourville, the Engineers built up a further storey, to accommodate the Marshal's Staff, which is reached across a small court formed at this point by the outer wall.

It was certainly not Mansard who designed it. It is full of crooked corners, and its enclosure is crowded with sheds which serve as a garage. But at the gate, like a sentinel on guard, stands a magnificent Japanese varnish-tree, which spreads over the entrance the shade of its branches. The Marshal is fond of trees, and that tree pleases him, because it reminds him of those on his estate in Brittany, where during his leave, it is his great pleasure to attend to the training of the trees he planted long ago.

For the rest, it matters little to him. What if this ancient military architecture has the appearance of a convent, what if the passages are dark, and the corridors are interminable, he pays little attention to it. Nevertheless, as all the windows of this corridor provide a view of the imposing mass of the Dôme, with its cupola, which preserves traces of its former gilt, he sometimes contemplates it. Though not sensitive to decorative beauty, he can admire certain fine works of art which strike a responsive chord among his secret ideals: "*Ah! they knew how to build!*"

In the arrangement of his own office he did not aim at luxury. His sole concern was with the conditions affecting his work. Firstly, as to the lighting. The two windows have their green plush curtains always looped back.

While directing the orderlies, to whom he even

lent a hand, in the work of removal, he had his large working-table so placed as to be flooded with light: he wanted to see clearly to write. Directly underneath one of these windows he arranged his atlas and his maps on a little table: he wishes to be able to trace the number of a position or the name of a village with ease and speed. Then there is space. The room is enormous, and little encumbered with furniture: a low bookcase on which a barometer is perched, a few chairs and armchairs which the zeal of the orderlies every morning arranges along the edge of the carpet, and in a corner there is a sofa. Then there is simplicity. For ornament not a single painting, not a single trophy. On the occasion of the last removal he had transferred to his room his Flag of Command, of which the bow was made up of the colours of the Allies. On the walls, maps of Europe and Germany fixed by drawing-pins. In front of the working-table stands an armchair, with a swivel seat, and close at hand is a telephone. It is in this small space that the Marshal operates. How it expresses his habits and sums up his whole studious life! It is an enclave of privacy, designed for hard work and hard thought. The table itself emphasises this impression. All round its edge stands a barricade of books, files, and calendars. Every day the barricade rises a little higher. Sometimes, after a rearrangement, it extends its foundations and begins to grow still higher. In front of a letter-rack

spreads a large blotting-pad fitting like a nest into this enclosing wall.

The radius of this little world is but the length of an arm. This narrow universe is enough for the Marshal, so long as it contains the instruments of work which he needs, and is accustomed to use: a plain glass ink-pot filled to the brim, and pen-holders of ordinary wood (he always uses the same one fitted with a gold nib, on which he has cut a notch by which to recognise it), pencils, erasers, a packet of tobacco in its grey paper wrapping, surrounded by several pipes, which he scrapes out with a prod of brass—a present from Lloyd George during the course of the War. In this room, at first sight so commonplace, but with everything serving a definite purpose, the Marshal is pleased to pass his days.

"*If you wish to see me, come to my office; you will find me there. I am there all the time.*"

Though he dislikes wasting his time, the Marshal makes a point of receiving—in the absence of special reasons for making an exception—all those who request an interview. It is not diversion that he expects from these visitors. He seeks to derive from their conversation some advantage in the form of fresh information or knowledge, for he is always impelled by the desire to know. So he finds especial pleasure in the society of those of whom he can say: "*He knows his business.*"

It is his last command. All his Staff is near him; his lines of communication are established—by special telephone system—with the Cabinet as well as with the Ministry of War and Foreign Affairs. That is the room from which, in the form of cipher telegrams, radiate orders to his subordinates, who play their part on the Rhine, in the plebiscite areas, and in the capitals of the late enemy countries, where the commissions of control are stationed. Gone are those wild careerings by car, which hurled him at full speed in every direction across the theatre of operations. Since the end of the War his method of action has been transformed. He no longer moves from his chair. Henceforth it is to him that they come—Ambassadors and Ministers, leaders of Allied Missions, and all those figures—American, English, Belgian, Italian, Japanese, or French generals—who act by his stimulation in Cologne or in Berlin, in Vienna or in Buda-Pest, in Constantinople no less than in Bucharest, in Prague or Warsaw, Silesia or Schleswig, in Memel or Allenstein. It is thus a centre of attraction, as well as of radiation. The Marshal enjoys such renown throughout the whole world that there is not a foreign personage of any importance who on his passage through Paris does not wish to meet him. And for him it is but one more way of serving his country to discuss foreign politics with diplomats, and to tell them his views, to expound

to statesmen his conception of security, to reveal to financiers and industrial magnates his opinions on war debts and reparations, as well as to give guidance to journalists in some of their campaigns. Not one of them goes away disappointed, even though he does not appear to them at the head of his armies or amid the aura of his glory, but in this severe and modest environment. The memory of such a meeting, however brief, remains graven in the minds of the most recalcitrant. The Marshal's features, so plainly stamped with energy, his piercing glance, his square jaw, his sharp gestures, no less than his keen questions, his mental penetration, his lucidity, and the candour of his opinions, leave so many clear-cut impressions.

In short, this office is like a tower of ivory, in which he finds the silence and the refreshment which he needs, with the sole company of his pipe. Sometimes he remains at his working-table; sometimes he buries himself in an armchair, with his books within reach of his hand. Now his features shrink and his eyes close; and now in turn he relaxes, leaning back his head, while his eye follows the wreaths of smoke which rise up eddying into the calm air. He is not dreaming, but absorbed in his thoughts. Sometimes he walks up and down his room, and his steps bring him in front of his maps; he pauses and studies them.

As he is to an astonishing degree master of his

thoughts, nothing disturbs him, neither visits nor telephone calls. When caught with pen in hand, he merely finishes the word he is writing, listens to the intruder, replies . . . and goes on with his sentence. He applies himself to his work as a carpenter to his bench, so effectively has constant meditation and concentration of thought given continuity and coherence to his reflections.

"It is certainly in the privacy of his office," General Weygand remarked to me, "that the Marshal most completely reveals himself. That is explained by the very method in which he works. This man of action has a tremendous capacity for thought. From the moment of rising, even while he is dressing, his thoughts are busy. Every morning he comes with something new in his head. That is why he has formed the habit of beginning the day by talking with me. '*Here,*' he often says to me, '*is the idea I had whilst shaving.*' This constant reflection, this concentration of thought, have given him an enormous range. His decisions are the results of his knowledge. He makes them quickly—after reflection, doubtless, but reflection not so much prolonged as vigorous. He smokes a great deal, which assists the work of contemplation. . . . The determination not to lose grip of his opponent, his tenacity and his perseverance, have grown to be reflex actions, the groundwork of his military strength, a kind of paternoster. As for me, my

only merit is to have allowed him to think at his leisure of the paramount problems, without wasting time over details—'those twopenny-halfpenny rigmaroles' to which, all the same, someone has to find a solution. I took all responsibility on such matters.

"At Bombon, in his office, the Marshal used to stride up and down the room smoking his pipe (we sometimes moved in the midst of a cloud of smoke), but more often we were in a car. The Marshal would talk. Not of the operation in progress . . . that was already laid down. One would trace out what it was developing into, what it promised to become in the future. But from the point of view of its general conception, all that was finished. He would concern himself with the following operation that was in course of planning, or with some other not yet completed which could be taken in hand. We would discuss it; we would argue about it. Sometimes we were compelled to part without having reached a conclusion. Nothing does so in a day! The idea, however, had taken root. '*Think it over!*' And later on we would take it up again. At other times the Marshal would return to an idea which, at first sight, had not seemed to me to contain any possibilities, because I had not grasped his whole thought. But he saw them. He would then expound and explain without my even yet being able to see quite to the bottom of it. And

remember, the Marshal is so sincere that he makes no effort at all to make a mystery of things, to delay bringing forward his idea until it is fully matured. He has no fear of displaying the actual workings of his mind. He says things as and when they occur to him. We are present at their birth, at their hatching. Little by little we see the idea develop and clarify. The Marshal hides nothing. There is only one thing which has any importance for him: the result. Then he would turn over his ideas in every direction. They sorted themselves out while he talked. In the end, sometimes he would express them in a striking manner in two or three phrases. When I left him, I could get to work and finish my task in the right way."

"WE WALKED TOGETHER. WE TALKED OF EVERYTHING"

Henceforth the habit seems to become fixed. Every day I make the journey with the Marshal from the office to the Rue de Grenelle at least once, often twice: a few hundred yards, a few minutes' walk. It is the best moment of the day. Each time, before parting, he stops in front of our door with a remark, "*The meeting is adjourned,*" or else exclaims as he moves on, "*Closing time!*"—unless in a tone of gaiety he flings at me: "*Aha! We now part!*"

Generals Weygand and Desticker leave with him, and accompany him to the gate. There, on the step of the gate, the parting takes place. The two Generals turn to the right along the Avenue de Tourville to return to their homes. The Marshal turns to the left to go up the Boulevard des Invalides, and I accompany him.

At the office, duty reigns. Not that the Marshal displays an uncompromising austerity, or is so unapproachable that one cannot discuss with him any but official matters, but that the conversation to which some opening occasionally gives rise has some difficulty in surviving. To stand up motionless near

the armchair where he is sitting does not create a favourable atmosphere. Work claims you. A telephone call or a visitor breaks in. . . .

Along the Boulevard des Invalides, where we walk side by side, amid the ever-changing spectacle of the street, elbowed by strangers, all those imponderables which just before increased the distance between us, now serve to diminish it. During these few moments we share the same physical life, we walk at the same pace. And so, quite naturally, conversation springs up and does not flag.

The Marshal usually pursues it with pleasure. Although he assumes a brusque manner, and loves to adopt a blunt tone, he has a sly wit, and often shows a racy humour. He is a Gascon with a lively imagination, always on the alert, a man of sound judgment, good solid common sense, simple disposition. His style of speech is vital and full of colour, packed with sinew and overflowing with metaphors. He speaks with spontaneity, humour, vigour, and frankness, never with bitterness or malice. His estimates are sometimes severe, but never ill-natured. And they appear, in that terse form which is his habit, clothed in some stimulating simile whose brilliance scarcely conceals its burning barb. A true soldier, he does not spare criticism, and he does it with caustic vigour. Of a politician he

would say: "*He is a coward in a rage!*"; of another: "*He is a peacock; he has all its pride and all its futility!*"; or again of a third: "*He is an eel . . . he slips away like macaroni!*"

His arguments are often too rapid in their very effort to avoid excessive complexity. He can handle irony, is not afraid of a joke, and does not shrink from a strong expression, but without ever descending to vulgarity. He frankly proclaims his tastes and preferences; he does not conceal his dislikes. He has his own point of view—a certain number of ideas which are dear to him, and to which he likes to return again and again. He does not care if he repeats himself; he says what he wants to say, what he wants one to know, and he repeats it whenever the occasion demands . . . and will go on repeating it as often as he deems it necessary. Whether it be advice or opinions or recollections, he will present them every time in almost the same way, with almost the same phrases, the same turns of expression, the same figures of speech: they are the best, the most expressive . . . why change them?

Sometimes I fancy him to be absorbed. I take care not to distract him. And of his own motion, after a certain time, he will begin to think aloud. He continues his inward debate, gives a shape to his musings. Sometimes, if the person or the event I am trying to discuss is displeasing to him, he does

not reply, or does so with a grumble. Then, to break a heavy silence, I have to find another subject. It is not always easy. I know already only too well those which are taboo. Novels, for instance:

"*I have never read much. The Staff College, then the command of a Division, then an Army Corps . . . I had enough to do. I have never read any of Anatole France. . . . Yes! I know. He had a wonderful command of form. . . . Form? How do you suppose that concerns me? If it does not help to* say *something, what use is it? They talk of the language, of the preservation of the language. But our language is beautiful and useful only in so far as it serves to express ideas. . . . Form is a framework, nothing but a framework. What is the good of a fine frame if the picture is hideous? Form? Artists? You see, times change. And nowadays it is economic questions which take precedence. We Latins are too fond of form, we are carried away by beauty of form. It would be better for us to apply our resources to our new needs. . . . Let us beware of becoming Carthaginians like the English, who are developing into the merchants of the world. . . . But let us also take care not to become Athenians.*"

My only resource was to put to him a question about the War. "*I live in the memory of a past which is always present to my eyes.*" But it is not always easy to strike forth from this living rock

the waters of memory. . . . Then suddenly the Marshal picks up the broken thread and begins to talk. The impression of some incident, flashing across his mind, has unsealed the fountain. Themes in abundance arise and develop, while his whole past life supplies proofs of the theories he advances and examples to illustrate them. He is inexhaustible. His conversations, to put it briefly, are most often nothing but long monologues. And I listen to them religiously. His great triumphs all the world knows; history has recorded them. But his opinions of persons and things, his judgments on events past and present, his reminiscences of war and the lessons he draws from them, his conceptions and counsels—what an inexhaustible mine! He is authoritative in statement, daring in deduction, returning always to some solid and fundamental principle. His rugged style is sometimes laboured, but always full of illuminating revelation, vivid and convincing ideas, expressions which strike the imagination and the memory. He applies the term "*bureaucratic macaroni*" to an official report in which the writer fails to take up a definite standpoint; and when he speaks of an orator whose discourse flows on in resonant and empty periods, he observes: "*These warm-water taps are beyond me!*"

On the other hand, speaking of Cardinal Mercier: "*He was a great man. He soared above us all, but he was no dreamer, he was a man of action.*

. . . I have forgotten what was the exact occasion of the speeches. But, when they had all indulged their eloquence, the Cardinal rose and crushed them all by laying down, in that calm voice of his, certain unalterable principles. At the end of his speech came the following sentence, which struck me; something like: 'Truly France is a great nation; but to remain so she must remember it.' That was a lapidary phrase of the loftiest sublimity, yet at the same time of incomparable simplicity. Indeed, he raised the tone of that assembly to the noblest heights, and yet with the simplest words, with the most ordinary words, free from all rhetoric. . . . We all wondered how he could reach such elevation. . . . What an intelligence! . . . And, with all that, he had a definite belief, a philosophy, a sense of values! He was one of the great figures of the War."

The Marshal's phrases are brief and compressed, his speech abrupt, at the risk of ignoring grammatical construction. Their theme passes from one personality to another without any indication; but the meaning is clear. The word "they" is continually breaking in, to represent people he does not wish to name though he wishes to discuss them! Though his speech is rapid, his thought is even more so. . . . It is often hardly given full expression. It is almost a riddle. And if I suggest an answer, to show that I have understood, it is useless,

because he is no longer thinking of what he has just said, but of what he is going to say. He asks a question, but does not wait for an answer . . . and already he is proceeding to the next point, as if one had replied . . . while all the time his play of feature is supplementing his speech, his gestures are adding a sharper focus and clarity to his thoughts. . . . There are abrupt pauses, sometimes to draw on the ground with his stick explanatory diagrams or a plan showing a tactical position or an illustrative sketch to prove his point, sometimes a pause for reflection when, standing bolt upright with his shoulders well braced back, he lowers his chin, wrinkles his cheeks, clenches his teeth, knits his brows, pulls his hat over his eyes . . . and then, having found the required word or idea, resumes his normal gait. And he starts off again, whirling his cane, as if this overflow of physical energy were a necessary accompaniment to his intellectual activity. If he is discussing delicate questions with you, he seems to possess a sixth sense which warns him of the approach from behind of a stranger whose presence he cannot tolerate. He stops to let the stranger pass. . . . Silence again. He is meditating. If I ask a question which changes the subject, he will exclaim: "*No! Wait!*" He has been led back by a rebound of his thoughts, by a fresh recollection, by a convincing argument. He wants to exhaust the subject.

When out walking the Marshal is always in mufti, and he goes home by car on days when he has to wear uniform. Quietly dressed, he wears in his buttonhole only the ribbon of the Military Medal. In the mornings, on this habitual journey, he is recognised by the passers-by. Most of them are officers from the Ministry and the Defence Committee,[1] or Civil Servants; they salute him. The Marshal always replies very affably to those whom he knows, as he passes by, "*Good morning, gentlemen!*" The number of times he has to raise his hat as he goes up the Boulevard des Invalides attracts the attention of casual bystanders. They stop, stare, wonder . . . and raise their hats also—often too late—and still stare after him, as if they were asking: "Is that really Marshal Foch we've just passed?"

Sometimes the Marshal sees an unfamiliar figure emerge from No. 4A, and asks: "*Who is that?*"

"General So-and-so!"

"*Are you sure?*"

"Yes, sir!"

"*General So-and-so!*" the Marshal murmurs. . . .

"Good-morning, sir!" cries the General.

"*Well, well!*" replies Foch, "*and how have you been getting on since you were at the Staff College? You were one of my pupils. . . . Let me see, I saw you again during the War at . . . on the . . .*"

[1] The Defence Committee is at 4A Boulevard des Invalides.

And Foch correctly quotes a date and the name of a place, so excellent is his memory, except perhaps when it comes to putting a name to a face. After that, as a rule, the conversation changes. The Marshal lets himself drift on the tide of reminiscence. . . .

One morning when General Graziani, that imposing figure, was coming toward us, in full dress uniform, the Marshal, being in unusually high spirits, forestalled him and was the first to raise his hat. Thereupon, when the General, who was rather surprised and disconcerted, came up, Foch burst out: "*Long live the Army, Graziani!*" And then, delighted with the effect he had produced, the Marshal went on his way, beating time with his cane to several bars of a tune which had been popular in his youth.

Every day, just outside the door of the Military Governor of Paris, the most conscientious and punctual of our regular "clients" bows to the Marshal as he goes swiftly along by the wall. He is a poor little old Government clerk, whose features recall those of M. Bergson and whose expression, at the moment of our daily salutation, lights up with a flame of devotion to make up for its lack of the least spark of intelligence. As soon as we have passed the point where we meet him, the Marshal murmurs: "*We are early to-day!*" or else: "*Hurry up, it must be late!*" Unhappily he has recently had

to remark: "*Well, now! We no longer see our little old man!*"

Reaching the end of the boulevard, he bears to the right. Faced by the open space of the esplanade, where motor-cars are rushing from several different directions, he pauses on the edge of the pavement, waiting for a favourable moment, and then dashes across, often at a run. If a vehicle cuts in unexpectedly, I warn him: "Look out on your left!" and every time I think involuntarily of the cry of Philip the Bold fighting beside King John: "Father! Guard your right! Father! Guard your left!"

In the Rue de Grenelle, the pavements are narrow. We are jostled by pedestrians. Cumbrous buses almost graze us as they thunder past, and their roar drowns our voices. Now beside the Marshal and now behind him, I can no longer hear what he says, though he continues to talk over his shoulder. Truth to tell, the Marshal himself is rather fond of these daily walks. He is not one of those dreamers who seek solitude to retire into themselves. On the contrary, he is open-hearted, and always most animated; he is easily drawn into conversation, when he enjoys airing his own views. He has always, indeed, pursued the practice of holding conversations during walks, whether for discussions with his pupils at the Staff College—"*I put them at their ease, encourage them to talk, draw them out. And then I know them*"—or, dur-

ing the War, for conversations with his Chief of Staff—"*We used to walk together and talk over all our problems. By this method he kept abreast of the latest developments and saw eye to eye with me. He knew my views as well as I did myself. How many of these walks we took in the park at Bombon in 1918! He was continually urging me to put my opinions on paper. But I always replied: 'No, no, but you do so if you wish.' The memorandum of July 24 was entirely his composition, but it reflects my views exactly.*"

It is a plan which allows him at the same time to take exercise and keep his mind busily at work. During these moments of relaxation and intimacy, he entirely throws off all reserve, with no attempt to secure an effect or maintain a pose, whether he is recalling his memories or whether—his mind haunted by an idea—he is elaborating it, maturing it, discussing, expounding, trying to give it a better expression. And what an excellent method of reasoning and judgment! In a word, his conversation is a series of concrete cases, which he puts one after the other and analyses, now by describing them, now by striving to solve them—whether it is a problem of politics, or a question of history, finance, or morality, a decision to reach, an opinion to express. To every specific problem he gives a specific solution: "*No stereotyped solutions! One must learn to reason.*"

His intimate conversations often proceed by fits and starts. Moreover, they are influenced, not only by the person to whom they are addressed, but also by the circumstances of the moment, the business of the day, meetings more or less important, sometimes by the temperature. And, further, his tone of voice and play of feature often say more than his words.

When, in the heat of conversation, he indulges in rather too petulant expressions, he rightly repudiates any charge of malice.

"Perhaps I did say that. It is more or less what I think. But, if I had to put my signature to it, I should insist on revising it. . . . And, besides, people attribute all kinds of remarks to me. It is only what I put in writing that counts."

And the Marshal is only too conscious of the importance of his utterances, to allow them to be exploited by the attribution of a construction which he did not imply, and, above all, of an intention which never crossed his mind. When his remarks bear the appearance of paradox they must not be taken as final and dogmatic statements, but as examples of a turn of wit which is really an integral part of his mind.

So, while recording these conversations, even with the most pious fidelity, one would run the risk of giving them a false appearance, in spite of all one's efforts, if one did not take the precaution

of emphasising the danger of drawing too rigid deductions from them. In the sphere of psychology the methods of attaining exact knowledge are so imperfect that it is difficult to achieve absolute certitude. Nevertheless, the recurrence of certain subjects in different circumstances, the repetition of identical reactions, the process of verification, and the accumulation of evidence—all these supply ample clues enabling one to furnish a sound enough basis for the interpretation of the facts herein recorded. And, besides, history itself will bear witness to their accuracy. The life of the Marshal will confirm his words.

"M. DE LA PALISSE IS MY BEST FRIEND" [1]

The Marshal does not cast aside all reserve at the first meeting. No doubt the principal traits of his character make an immediate impression on the less penetrating observers, but, at the same time, they furnish only the mere outlines of a silhouette. So the impression which he gives of possessing a personality of extraordinary strength is true, but not the whole truth, because that strength, while apparently a purely natural gift, is really, first and foremost, the creation of his own will, which maintains, organises, and co-ordinates itself. It cannot be said that the Marshal is "double-faced," for there is no man more frank and sincere than he; rather, he has several, according to whether he is striving desperately to achieve an object or finds his mind freed from all preoccupations, whether "*things are looking up*" or "*are at a standstill,*" whether he is interested in a conversation or is not listening to it, to avoid waste of time.

Thus, the Marshal is at once simple and complex, with a host of inconsistencies that are more apparent than real, but manifest enough to confuse the observer. He is modest, but can recall his posi-

[1] A proverbial character who is responsible for such truisms as "Day follows night."—Translator's note.

tion when necessary; stern, with moments of charming gaiety; precise, he sometimes issues vague orders or curt explanations; distant and inaccessible, he can show a visitor the warmest courtesy; he is autocratic, but can take advice; loyal and straightforward, but sometimes Machiavellian. In his convictions he is at once lenient and inflexible, tolerant and immovable. His despotism does not rob him of compliance, nor his rigour of clemency; his severity is tempered by a fine sense of justice, and his angers sometimes end in tangible tokens of benevolence. One might accuse him of imaginative poverty, but one must admire the range and elevation of his intellectual power.

It is not enough, then, to dismiss the Marshal with a mere glance, or even to observe him with the closest attention; he must be *understood*. And for that one has to go with him to the very bottom of things, to examine the chain of cause and effect, to analyse him to the last detail, not to be carried away by superficial impressions.

Fortunately, he himself gladly takes his own mechanism to pieces to show its wheels and to discover how it works. He has remained the Professor, who desires to share his experience with the world. And in doing so he performs a useful task.

Thus, in order to give—in connection with an enquiry into the teachings of the War—"a thought which may serve as a clue to those whom the War

has left in confusion," the Marshal observes: "*Draw up for me a memorandum: on the necessity for an object, a plan, and a method.*"

General purport: "The War has taught me the necessity, with a view to success, for an object, a plan, and a method. To have an object, one must know what one wills; to form a plan, one must know the extent of one's powers; and, to carry it out, one must watch closely the application of one's resources."

Criticism: "It was not the War which taught me that; I knew it long ago. Put down instead:

"*Once more, the War has shown the need for a plan, a method, a definite object, if it is to be carried to a successful conclusion.*"

". . . *But a plan is useless, unless one puts it into practice. You've got to execute it . . . ah! there is the word: 'Execution'! Continue:*

"*Even as, in their execution, there must be a controlling force which applies these schemes and controls their application.*

" . . . *Execution, direction? . . . No.*"

Proceeding to execution:

"*One must have, as a second necessity, a directing force . . . ? No.*

". . . *And it must be carried out with tenacious vigour. . . . I should prefer 'vigorous tenacity'; and the part about controlling force should come first:*

"Once more, the War has shown the need in its controlling force for a plan, a method, a definite object, which must be carried out with vigorous tenacity."

" . . . You see, these first principles are not so easy to express. You have to turn them in all directions. When you have done that, I think it goes well enough. But polish it still more. Success lies only in unremitting work, well-directed and controlled." . . . And he repeats once more: *"The need for a definite aim is a general, a primary rule of everyday life, for arriving at any result whatsoever. Choose your aim, and make your plans accordingly. Map out your programme. Again, see that your ideas are in order, that you work methodically, and don't fritter away your energy."*

In this way, the Marshal constantly depicts himself.

He is a man of action who forges forward towards a practical issue. There is nothing speculative about his method. It is precisely what it claims and ought to be: simple, practical, realistic. Clarity, precision, and accuracy—principles which are easy to understand and to apply, which impress themselves on the mind, fix themselves in the memory, and in a moment of crisis rise up in shining presence out of the darkness to guide you. A solid basis, a definite moral foundation, and a stable equilibrium; normal, rational, and reasonable ten-

dencies; ideas well thought out and well directed —in a word, the soundest and sanest of good common sense.

Through experience and reflection, the Marshal has learned to value those obvious truths which people so often forget or despise. Furthermore, it is a characteristic of men of experience that they can think and say: "*M. de la Palisse*[1] *is my best friend.*" Since they understand the profundity and the worth of certain elementary principles, they are not ashamed of their outlook. When their authority lends weight to their advice, they feel it their duty to formulate it and to lay stress upon it. The Marshal is no exception.

One can well understand that he becomes annoyed with people who spend their lives "*in splitting hairs.*" "*You must not to be too subtle,*" he says frequently.

In action, too, questions of study, of preparation, and of weighing pros and cons go by the board. "*You must simply do what you can, in order to put your knowledge to practical use.*" Hesitancy and self-distrust are weak points. His freedom from these qualities is not a matter of pride, but the outcome of a mind which knows that it is supported by the right principles and upheld by an unconquerable will.

His categorical statements—"One *must* . . ."—

[1] See previous footnote.

may appear rigid and absolute in their imperative brevity; but they have so general an application that they give directions rather than limits, and constitute a framework, not narrow but indispensable.

He drops these aphorisms into the conversations, one after another, till they seem to follow each other like waves. They begin by assaulting the stronghold, they end by capturing it. They are fundamentally excellent and useful rules; they prove still more so if you put them to the proper use, for they have primarily a constructive quality. The Marshal has turned them to account with extraordinary effect, because he gives force to all the means that he uses, inspires them with a driving-force that is irresistible, and produces the maximum output from them.

They are the component parts of energy, just in the same way as he is himself a creator, a "transformer" of energy.

Hear him once again. Even in the course of some casual discussion upon a valueless topic, his personality shines out, the chief traits of his character impress themselves upon you. He gets to the point on each occasion with marvellous acumen. He exhales a vigorous, healthy atmosphere, such as you find in one of those mountain health-resorts where you go to take the fresh-air cure. Vulgarities, tricks, intrigues are as alien to him as fever-laden

air would be in such a place. He lifts you to his level and keeps you there. He raises your spirit with his simple maxims. He glows with moral force, he emits waves of power, he creates his own atmosphere. The memory of the service that he has rendered is not the sole cause for this; it lies also in his uprightness, his loyalty, his nobility of ideals, and, most of all, in his unswerving will towards an end, as well as this determination to do whatever he has to do as well as he can. He stimulates the imagination. What is his secret? You need not look far; he will tell you himself.

"*You must have knowledge; it is the foundation with which you cannot dispense. You must have the power of accomplishment, and to that end you must develop your faculties of thought, of judgment, of analysis, and of synthesis. But what is the use of all these things, if they function in a vacuum? You must make up your mind with determination, and work towards your object, without swerving. Most important of all is action, if you are to bring your theories to fruition, to produce results. Work; set stone upon stone; keep on building. You must do something, you must act, you must obtain results. Results!—that is all I consider.*"

KNOWLEDGE

"WHATEVER YOU DO, YOU MUST DO WELL, NO MATTER HOW UNIMPORTANT IT IS"

The Marshal is punctual to the last degree in his daily routine. He knows that everyone in his office is awaiting him; and, although he has reached the pinnacle of distinction, he is his own disciplinarian and his exemplary punctuality has a dignity of its own.

Each morning he arrives at 9.30 a. m. He leaves at ten minutes past noon. His daily itinerary is set out and followed with the utmost care. If he arrives a little late, if he leaves rather early, he almost apologises and gives us a reason for it. The day's work is too sacred in his eyes to admit any caprice into its accomplishment. His complete existence swings along in an unbroken rhythm, always and in every circumstance. He is the same to us, in his private office, as he is at the head of the allied armies, with their commanders-in-chief. There is no major and no minor business for him. "*Whatever you do, you must do well, no matter how unimportant it is.*" You realise fully that he could not be other than he is, that he cannot act otherwise than he does. He is a river which cannot cease its flow.

He puts into practice daily the principles which he enunciates. He sets an example, and one cannot help but follow it.

Only we two A.D.C.'s are privileged to accompany him into his office as soon as he arrives. The routine is unvaried. He hangs his cap and cloak on the coat-stand, puts his stick in the corner, goes towards the barometer and looks at it attentively. He shows us, by word or by gesture, the reading he finds there, turns on his heel, and, with his usual springy gait, reaches his chair. In winter, he makes an extra turn to consult the thermometer and to verify the heat of the radiators.

His letters are awaiting him on his blotting-pad. Before commencing to open them, he sits on the edge of his armchair and begins by wiping his eyeglasses. They are of the simplest variety, with a nickel mount, hung by a black thread—which breaks now and then; then he makes a new knot.

He opens all his letters himself, reads the first few lines, glances down at the signature and then returns in search of the vital passage. Some of them show touching evidence of all that he means in the eyes of unknown admirers, far away but friendly.

Most of them, however, come from people with a favour to ask.

When one of them, meaning to flatter him, begins or ends with the phrase "To the great and vic-

torious soldier," the Marshal begins to read it aloud, stops at the first words, remarks "*Boum! Boum! Here comes the big drum!*" and passes on.

He gives his patronage freely to all associations of ex-soldiers who ask for it, of whatever rank or whatever religion they may be. To all demands for special aid he puts forward this argument:

"*If we once begin to do this, we shall never be able to stop.*"

All demands are passed on to the proper authority.

"*Tell them we have taken the appropriate steps. We must reply to everyone.*"

He is merciless to all requests for autographs—

"*Do we know him? No! To the waste-paper basket!*"

We stand on his right, ready to catch the phrase which gives us the gist of the reply to send. We must give him the closest attention, for he insists on his own ideas and expressions. If he makes a special point of anything, we must not forget to put it into the draft which we submit to him, at the risk of having to do it again. If he has used the expression "*deeply honoured,*" nothing but this will satisfy him. "*You are going too far,*" he will say sometimes; or else, "*You are understating my point: put down what I tell you.*" Sometimes, and for excellent reason, he is less explicit. "*Tell them . . . yes, that's right. . . . I shan't be able . . .*

you understand. . . . Send them a polite answer and tell them why. . . ."

He reads with the greatest care whatever you give him for signature, whether it be an official report or a mere polite note. His character appears as plainly in his corrections as in his directions; precision, clearness, and care. "*What's this?* 'I have taken great interest in reading this book!' *No, no! I haven't read it. Always tell the truth. Write, please,* 'I *think I shall find great interest in reading it'!*"

At such times, he instructs us in his principles of the art of writing. "*It is characteristic,*" he says, "*of second-rate writers that they always put an adjective after each word,*" and he scores out ruthlessly all the adjectives that he finds, together with the adverbs which make a phrase heavy, and even all the first personal pronouns that he finds. "*Do not commence a letter by saying 'I.' It is detestable!*" He reads each phrase slowly, reconstructs it, changes the order of the prepositions, abbreviates, amends, cuts, touches up again and again, until the page is criss-crossed with lines and words in every direction. As he makes the alterations he repeats, "*Precision at any cost; don't be afraid of it. Keep on polishing, polishing, polishing. Cut your phrases short; no verbs in the passive—one must feel that—and polish still more. A clear expression of your thought is the art of writing.*"

Before signing a copy of the order of the day of November 12th, 1918, he said, "*This phrase 'Posterity reserves its gratitude to you' . . . Is that a good phrase?*"

"*I should have written* 'will reserve.' "

"*Yes; and yet one writes 'The future holds for us . . .' The children who are being born at this moment are posterity. They exist. They are already 'reserving.' The future? That would be a command. The present is certain! When this phrase was written, I hesitated. I asked the advice of General Weygand! He said,* 'It's bad!' *I took it out . . . the future. And I have kept my phrase!*"

"*Prefaces? They bore me!*" he says each time he is asked for one. In consequence, you can count those which he has signed.

He has just refused two, straight off, for more definite reasons.

Apropos of the translation of the memoirs of Von Kluck, written by General Buat, he declared, "*I do not wish to criticise a conquered general, as if putting the final touch to his downfall.*" Then he remarked wittily, "*After Sadowa, they came to ask Moltke what he thought of Benedeck; and Moltke, who did not lack subtlety, replied,* 'If I had been beaten, would you have gone to ask him what he thought of me?' "

In the case of the War documents published by an Alsatian, he gave the excuse "*No, the Allies*

would say once more that I wish to stir up mankind against Germany."

In order to avoid a refusal, a Député was cunning enough to submit to him a preface which was already written, which he would only have to sign if he approved. "*It is well enough,*" he admitted, "*but people will see clearly enough that Foch did not write it. It is too long!*"

The truth is that it does not bore him so much to write a preface as to read the book for which he would have to write it. He knows the influence of a few lines signed with his name; and he does not wish to make himself the sponsor of a book without due consideration. "*Whatever you do, do it well*" is his motto at every turn; and he holds to this Kantian precept in his own rules of life—with a flash of Gallic insight.

It is a pleasure to see him write, so carefully, with his beautiful hand, long and round like a pearl-shell with its glowing tones, holding his penholder between his fine slender fingers; gravely, he outlines the proud characters of his script—firm, high, almost upright, completely balanced, adorned with sudden swellings in the midst of the letters, because he presses heavily on each downstroke. Often at the edge of the page his writing becomes narrow, decreases in size and ends by running below the line, so that he may not have to break a word which he has once begun. Sometimes he stops in the mid-

dle of a phrase, his pen lifted up, goes back to the preceding words; he smooths his moustache, nibbles it and thinks for a moment. Then, in his mind, he tries various phrasings and goes on, with the utmost precaution. When he has come to the end, he reads aloud what he has just written, watching the punctuation jealously, dotting his "i's," adding commas.

During these moments, as I sit near him, almost touching him, I have literally beneath my eyes the man who was for a time the ruler of the destinies of the world. I look at his head, whose grey hairs do not hide the bumps or the scar of his war-time motor accident. In his brain, sheltered by the curve of his forehead, with his temples throbbing under the beat of his arteries, the outcome of battles has been lodged; the life of millions of men, the fate of nations, and the destiny of the greatest war in the world's history. The sight of him draws me back from the present, and either flings me into the past of memories which tear my heart-strings or, on the contrary, makes me foresee the glorious memory which I shall cherish in the future. But I must not dream. The faintest moment of inattention may throw me into arrears. I must follow the progress of his work, watch his movements, guess at his thoughts; in some way attempt to keep ahead of them, in order that I shall not be left too far behind.

Suddenly he asks, "*Have you something for me?*" It is just as bad to let oneself be caught dreaming as to try to force the pace and bring up several fresh cases at once or make two enquiries at the same time. He does not permit the scattering of attention and always concentrates his own. "*Do not talk about two things at the same time! Do not mix up the different questions!*" He likes precision in thought as much as in replies.

To divert the current of his thought, without good reason, causes similar trouble.

Thus, while giving him some information, I happened to add a personal reflection, by a quite unconscious association of ideas. He listened to the beginning, then let his attention wander. But, as soon as I had finished, he cut me short with, "*That is not my affair! Don't try to involve me in all that!*" He is right. That is one of his strong points: "*No irrelevancy!*"

We never find him either striking attitudes or letting things slide: two qualities equally foreign to his nature. His arrangements for our comfort are as considerate and helpful as we could wish. They make our office run smoothly, and there is no formality to cause discomfort. He avoids any insistence on our difference of rank, so long as we do not disregard it. He is just, and his censures are never undeserved. One realises that he is guided by intellect, not by emotion. Trivial incidents—but

full of significance; various indications of the same need for precision in all things, even the most minute; demands made for the good of the service, but without fussing or paltry exaggerations; abruptness natural to his keen and autocratic disposition; touches of temperament, not important in themselves, but interesting as marks of tendency and symptoms of mental states.

His habit of life, his style of expression, with its individual turns of phrase, his whims and idiosyncrasies—all these appear from day to day without ever discounting the uniformity and consistency of his character. It is his daily life which best reveals his tastes and tendencies, which throws the clearest light upon the subtler shades of his personality. Logicality, poise, common sense, and tenacity, which form its basis, show themselves at every moment.

There is a hallowed phrase which sets us free: "*Tell General Weygand that I am in.*"

Thereupon enters, in uniform with boots and spurs, the elegant Weygand, a keen cavalry officer, who rides every morning, a man of wiry physique, full of youth, vigour, and energy. A dour worker, endowed with great activity, intelligence, and resource, he has been since 1915 the most intimate confidant and the most reliable adviser of the Marshal. He knows the profound affection and esteem which his Chief feels for him; and yet it *is* his

Chief, whom he admires and serves with perfect loyalty and unlimited devotion, and as such he evinces the most respectful deference. He stands up at the other side of the table, and the greatest liberty he takes is to rest his hands upon it. This discipline is not a hindrance. General Weygand talks to the Marshal with freedom and confidence.

Before starting work, they exchange news, enquire after each other's health, thus bridging the gulf of a few hours' separation. Sometimes, if the events of the day deserve comment, the Marshal lights his pipe and installs himself on the sofa in a half-recumbent position so as to have support for his head. The General follows, but does not sit down.

However, this daily moment of relaxation is seldom prolonged, for the Marshal is always in a hurry to reach serious matters. His Chief of the General Staff, who has opened the official mail, makes his report on it. The discussion begins. Whatever the subject is, he remains faithful to his principle:

"*The major problems? I handle them as if they were minor. It is not difficult. The method is always the same.*"

Then they set to work. . . .

"ONE MUST EXAMINE QUESTIONS TO THE BOTTOM"

The Marshal has the mathematical mind.

To "handle a problem" means having a theorem to solve: the method of viewing the proposition is the same, and so is the technique adopted in seeking for the solution.

First arrange the data. That impels one to view the question at issue objectively.

"*Let us proceed in due order. I take a sheet of paper; I write. To write down point by point is an excellent thing for focusing one's thought. It clears the ground.*"

The familiar and yet vivid form which the Marshal gives to his memoranda renders them especially suggestive. He willingly gives a practical lesson. For instance, in connection with a movement of troops:

"*You do not know how to work; you give me figures, you give me hours, distances; you assure me about one thing, you wish to do another. You talk and talk and talk! How do you expect me to see where I stand? Show me the file. One must have all the papers. . . .*"

Even while he speaks he is formulating the ques-

tion, emphasising it, writing down its separate elements, one below the other: (*a*) . . . (*b*). . . . He is drawing up columns, calculating distances, periods, noting results; and finally on the page now covered with signs, words, and figures, with one stroke of the pen, he draws a circle round a group which indicates the decision he has taken.

He discusses the question just as he would solve an equation: examines all the possible issues, changes the symbols, and alters the value of the different factors, so that none of the possible consequences may escape him. But he never lets himself be influenced by a partial result. He must have certainties on which to base his arguments. He seeks an ideal solution, that which best answers to the object he proposes to attain. It is towards that solution that all his efforts bend. But how secure it? What are the means? Are *these* inadequate? No use wasting time over them! Which of them come nearest to what he wants? Does none of them satisfy him? Then he must find some. His imagination supplies them. They are hard to set in motion; but no matter! His power of will comes into play. They *must* lend themselves to the task. This is what we must do. Is it possible? No. Why? If the reason is incontestable:

"*Good. No more of that!*"

Otherwise he pores over it, turns it this way and

that, till he succeeds in clearing away all that at first sight seemed to present insurmountable difficulties. He does not wear himself out against a sheer impossibility, but there is no obstacle which can stop him.

"*You attack them, one after the other. So you master them in the end.*"

And he continually brings back the discussion to the "*main point,*" taking his bearings with accuracy and precision, dismissing the "*subsidiary,*" and ending with a "*summary.*" Subjected to this strenuous and yet subtle treatment, the problem is transformed and simplified. When the solution is a paramount necessity, the ways and means appear. The choice of a plan should be dictated, not by the available resources, but by the object in view.

"*One must work hard at one's case,*" he repeats constantly. And he himself examines every case to the very bottom. He entrusts the first stage of their examination to his colleagues.

"*Look at it both inside and outside.*"

In preparing a case, one must not bring him "*impressions—I am not asking you what you think*"—but "*certainties,*" "*actualities.*" Even when he asks if it is cold, you must not reply: "The air is fresh," but how many degrees are shown on the thermometer. Positive, accurate, verified information, the "*facts*" alone constitute, for

him, a solid basis. "*Do not support yourself with phrases, but with facts. With them you can construct.*"

"*The cause of the superiority of my General Staff during the War, with men like Weygand, Desticker, and Georges, was that everyone studied his problems to the core, knew what was the real question, and reached his decisions with full knowledge of the case. No amateurish facility. No mere opinion. When one says:* 'I believe that . . . ' *one is being amateurish.* 'I fancy that the enemy will do this . . . or that. . . .' *That is bad!* 'I believe . . . !' *Indeed! One must be* certain! *One must think it out, see the possibilities, calculate them, judge, decide, and then things move!*"

That is the method he himself employs when he has a report to draw up, a "note" to write, an address to prepare. He begins by absorbing all the documents, calls for exact statistical and historical material, amasses information, asks for advice, listens to all the suggestions. Already he has jotted down on sheets of paper (those which lay nearest his hand) the ideas supplied by his first reflections, disconnected phrases, often written in abbreviations. Then he classifies them and polishes while copying out. "*To write on any subject I have to steep myself thoroughly in it, next seek out a method of expression for my thought, finally the form in which to cast it.*" By dint of erasions, al-

ternatives, and corrections, he produces a first sketch which he has typed "*to get a clear view of it,*" since, "*once it is in type, it has quite a different appearance, and its faults stare you in the face.*" Then he begins again to correct, omit, add, modify, polish, until he is fully satisfied. And during this elaboration, which sometimes lasts several days, one can follow step by step the progress of his thought. The ideas he wants to develop haunt him. They recur every moment in his conversations. He is examining, shaping, and testing them.

Constantly, doggedly, indefatigably, he persists in the pursuit of knowledge, because knowledge produces "*convictions, confidence, the power of enlightened decision, creates capacity for action and develops the character. In contrast, every man who is conscious of his ignorance, or of his need for the advice of others, is always irresolute, perplexed, and on the verge of demoralisation.*"

"TO KNOW A TRADE, ONE MUST LEARN IT"

In his *Principles of War,* Colonel Foch wrote: "To be disciplined does not mean to be silent, to hold one's hand, or perform only what one believes oneself capable of undertaking; it does not mean the art of avoiding responsibility, but the power to carry out effectively orders received, and for that purpose to find within one's mind, by study and reflection, the ability to execute those orders, and, within one's character, the moral strength to face with confidence the risks involved in their execution. In the higher command, discipline is equivalent to mental energy and moral activity. Mental indolence leads to indiscipline as surely as does insubordination. In either case, it is a fault deserving censure. Incapacity and ignorance are not extenuating circumstances, since knowledge is within the reach of all who seek it."

But what must one do to acquire it? Learn! How?

The Marshal is too much the enemy of ready-made formulas, of what he calls "stereotyped solutions," to give a recipe. He cannot, for instance, show engineers or novelists how to succeed. It is only the results of his own personal experience that

he knows so well. Nor does he wish to present himself as a pattern. Not at all. His own feats—which he narrates with complete detachment—are merely an example to illustrate a general rule which everyone should try to apply according to his own qualities and opportunities.

"*I can speak only of my own profession. You must pursue your own. Learn it. That is all I can say. I followed mine, slogging away at it in every direction. I have succeeded probably because I had worked hard at my calling and knew it. If I have been able to make headway against circumstances, it is because I had so thoroughly exercised the muscles of the mind that they had strength enough to act. . . . What forced me to work at my profession was having to teach it. When you are a professor you have to pay attention to what you say. You must be well up in your subject to hold your own in discussion. And I am all for discussion. I do not believe that what I say is gospel. I try to account for it. I asked myself: 'What are the elements of war?' I read Clausewitz.* . . . There *was a man for you! There was something solid in that book. He had been to war, knew it at first hand. Blücher, Scharnhorst too. They were fine fellows. But men of their calibre would have had their work cut out to get the advantage over a Colossus like Napoleon! Their patriotism was their guide. No doubt. But, above all, the cause to which they*

had given themselves. You always succeed when you give yourself to a cause, when you avoid dissipating your energies, when you do not wish to have a try at everything. And then Moltke also. Have you read his correspondence? It is from there that I derived all my ideas, for it always takes me back to 1870. . . . I do not say a word about the Emperor. It was Moltke who was the great master, the god! He is the finest historical type that one can possibly study, because he had the sense of discipline, an unqualified absorption in work, and a horror of words, of the idle phrase-making which destroys the power of action."

The Marshal is not the man of one formula, any more than he is a man of one book. He has followed the example of the bees in Montaigne, which "ravage the flowers on every side, but afterwards make from them the honey which is all their own."

"How do you read? . . . To read for the sake of reading: that is rather shallow. Have you tried, after reading a page, to find what there is in it? What constitutes its value? Do you make a note of it? . . . Do you re-read it a fortnight later? Compare the two readings. You will say to yourself: It is not the same thing at all; I have not understood a word of it. . . . Begin again. Every time you will make a little progress. It is by this method that one develops one's powers of analysis, synthesis, and judgment . . . and after that one must build. It

is not enough to analyse: one must construct."

For, in learning one's profession, the study of the regulations which codify it is not enough: "*Textbooks encourage mental indolence. Something more is needed. Poor old regulations!*"

"*When Marshal MacMahon became President, he said:* 'Bring me the regulations,' *and, as there were none to show him what he had to do, he was lost. Regulations are all very well for conducting drill, but in the moment of danger something else is needed . . . the material and physical courage of a soldier has no connection with the moral courage that the leader must have. This courage is based upon knowledge. Knowledge is necessary to develop it, and one must work to secure knowledge. Otherwise, one deludes oneself for a time, but at the first difficulty one collapses: there is no longer a leader. . . . To work, it is not enough to learn regulations. It is not a question of drill: Right turn! Quick march! . . . one must learn to think.*"

To learn to think—that is, to learn to fix one's attention, to concentrate, to discover the essentials of a question, and for that purpose to "*eliminate.*" To learn means to find the answer to the fundamental question: "*What is the real question?*"—a process which he has made so integral a part of his own mind that he has no need to be always appealing to it; for his whole outlook upon things responds to it constantly.

To learn means to judge without having recourse to formulas, to free oneself from all narrow rules, which are useful only to mediocrities. It means to subject the mind to a *gymnastic process,* to enable it to find quickly the solution in those unforeseen situations in which both life and war are continually placing us, and most often without warning.

And, to stress still more strongly the importance which he attaches to this theory, he goes as far as paradox:

"Gifts! Gifts! There is no such thing. There is nothing but hard work. You have gifts, tastes, abilities? What importance has that? Do you believe in natural gifts? . . . No, one works, one perseveres! There is nothing but that! Even for the artists. Those whom I know are great workers. They are masters of their craft. They study it. They put forth enormous efforts. . . . Do not count upon gifts! Work! . . . If one does not know, one learns, one works, one unravels the knot . . . one succeeds only by what one is worth! . . . Ah! If I had to begin my life over again, I should not encumber myself with words. I should strike out into the domain of facts, and you would see what I should achieve!"

No doubt he wishes to indicate, by such insistence, emphasised by voice and gesture, that too many young people claim to be gifted only as an

excuse for doing nothing. To deprive them of the use of this excuse, which he rightly considers bad, he simplifies his argument in the extreme. At bottom his argument is this: natural gifts are rare, but even when they exist they are not sufficient. Far from denying the existence of such gifts, he believes in them and looks out for them. He rejects only the gifted who do nothing, because he knows that they will never achieve anything; while he keeps the average, the men of balance who work hard, because it is those who get results.

This conception of the all-importance of work is eminently moral and encouraging. The certainty of seeing one's efforts crowned with success protects one from that pessimism which is but a fear of oneself, a lack of confidence in one's own resources, a result of indolence, and therefore an unpardonable weakness, almost a form of cowardice. Work is a lever with which one can uplift the world.

He applies the principle to the actual circumstances: "*We have won the War, but we have not yet won the peace. We must keep on working. Yes, and with more energy, more ardour, more zeal. . . . With still more 'verve.' If we have not succeeded, it is because we have not done enough. It is not sufficient to examine present causes; we must look farther ahead. We must look deeper and deeper, until we find; and one does find. One al-*

ways finds, when one takes the trouble. Concentrate! Apply yourselves! Take hold of an idea and study it in all its aspects. Do not dissipate your efforts. . . . To plough well, you must stick to your furrow without leaving it; and to till your field to the best advantage, you must know it from end to end and from top to bottom."

By this continual glorification of work and knowledge the Marshal shows how inextricably, in his opinion, they are bound up together, how indispensable they are, and how fruitful in results. His sayings, no less than his example, his counsel, his achievements, bear witness to their efficacy. He creates an atmosphere of serious application in which the pursuit of duty and discipline is easy and natural.

Among colleagues, we all call him "The Governor." This familiar term, which we use in its best sense, is a signal mark of the devotion and affection which bind us to him, of the gratitude and respectful admiration with which we surround him, and also, a little . . . of the awe which he inspires in us.

The Governor! He is our connecting-link, our mainspring. We spend our lives near him, because of him, for him. We form, to quote the phrase which other colleagues apply to us, "The House of Foch." They are right. We constitute a single

homogeneous whole, very closely knit, and bearing the stamp of our Chief. We are subject only to a single influence: his. It dictates to us our only rule: work.

POWER

"ONE MUST TAKE EXERCISE AND LEAD A REGULAR LIFE"

Healthy, balanced, normal, allotting to each thing the precise importance which it deserves, knowing what he should do, and simply doing it—in the hour of tragedy, face to face with danger, even as now amid the aura of glory, he has never ceased to live close to the realities of life, unlike those pensive philosophers, those feeble souls, who in the study of a problem or some transient vexation suffer from loss of appetite! The body makes certain demands. One must submit to this necessity. There is no better method of mastering it. The Marshal regards this necessity in the light of a duty to fulfil. To eat in the officers' mess is regarded as a duty of the Service. One should do what is expected, each thing in its own good time. The Marshal is a well-disciplined soldier.

Besides, in his eyes, nothing that one is expected to do is beneath consideration.

"One must take exercise at every possible opportunity."

Formerly he was a keen horseman. Nowadays he compels himself to take daily walks, as he considers that walking is excellent for calming the mind,

keeping the muscles in good order, and therefore ensuring a good night's rest. These hygienic habits, moreover, are subsidiary to a more general system.

"*Exercise is necessary to enable the body to function properly; work, to keep the mind at its highest pitch. Yes. Work, exertion, effort—that is what produces results. One must work all the time and take exercise to keep the mind as fit as the body.*"

These considerations, obvious though they may appear, do not seem to him things to despise. On the contrary, he likes to repeat them, in order to emphasise all the importance which he attaches to them.

Health, that gift so precious to all, is a necessity to soldiers. Without it, how can they endure privation, fatigue, severe weather conditions? A sick soldier loses his whole value; he is one combatant the less. To the higher command, health gives that poise, vigour, energy, clarity of mind, that possession of all their resources, without which even their military genius may suffer defeat. Was not Napoleon ill on the days of Leipzig and Waterloo?

"Mens sana in corpore sano." A truism, no doubt, but not without its importance. It lays down its own rules.

"*One must lead a regular life.*" The Marshal willingly complies. His official duties are constantly laying traps for him. He does not let himself be caught: "*I never indulge in excesses.*" At all the

official banquets or dinners: "*I never take more than I need.*"

No more do journeys and ceremonies secure any hold over him.

"*I am a mere parcel. I let them pack me up. They exhibit me, then store me away again. I do not concern myself with anything. I have crossed the Channel, even the Atlantic. I am not afraid of seasickness. I sleep in a railway carriage. . . . And then, when you have been through the War, nothing more can tire you. In those days one was busy moving human material about . . . it was terrible. . . . One wondered when it would end. . . . But to-day?*"

As a matter of fact, his health is wonderful. It runs in his family. "*So in my family, my sister will soon be eighty; she is as active as you or I. My elder brother, who is a year and a half older than I, is in very good health. The most worn-out of us all is the youngest, the Jesuit, but that is because of the life he leads. He never gets any rest. When he takes his holidays, they consist of rising at 5 A. M. instead of 4 A. M.*"

"Did your parents live long?"

"*No. My father ate nothing when he woke in the morning, and at 11 o'clock he had only a couple of eggs. He did not get enough nourishment.*"

"At what age. . . ."

"He died at the age of seventy-seven."

"Fortunately, you have just told me that he did not live long!" I could not help remarking. Nor could the Marshal refrain from smiling with me.

Standing solidly upright on his bowed legs, with his head and shoulders square-cut, knotted like an oak with his short and powerful limbs, the Marshal gives an impression of strength not belied by the cast of his features, which are thrown into prominence by the deep lines of his face. Sprung from a sound and healthy stock—whose members are regarded as "dying young" when they pass away in the seventies—robust and brought up in a hard school, like the mountain folk of his country, inured to fatigue by the daily practice of physical exercises, despising his body to master it the more thoroughly, the Marshal fears no impairment of his strength and can thus keep his mind free from all material anxiety. He has such resistance to disease that he does not even recognise its presence.

"Is it true, sir, that you once attended the manœuvres without noticing that you had scarlet fever?"

"Yes. Or almost true. It was while I was at the Staff College, on a staff ride that I was conducting. When we reached the scene of operations I felt perhaps a little tired, as the weather was frightful; but the cadets were there. A large attendance had been secured and they could not send them back

again. I had to 'get down to it.' I carried out my manœuvre. On my return, I was peeling" (and he displays his hands and gazes at them with surprise). "*I consulted a medical officer. He said to me:* 'You must have had a fever.' '*That is quite possible,' I replied.* 'You have had scarlet fever,' *he went on.* '*Perhaps. Oh, it was nothing serious.*' "

"During the War, sir, were you not injured in a motor accident?"

"*Yes. On the road from Amiens to Châlons. It was in May 1916, before the battle of the Somme. I was with Fournier, my son-in-law. The road was good, we were not going too fast, but a country cart in front of us suddenly stopped. The horse took fright and swerved across the road. Our driver put on the brakes and we were flung against a tree. I went through the glass. Fournier collided with the door-frame and broke the bones of his nose. I had gashes all over my face, eyes, mouth, and head. It was near a place called Plessis-something-or-other. We were taken to Meaux. My M.O., André, rushed in from Amiens and sewed me up. I still bear the scars. It was on a Thursday. By Sunday I was off again, my head all bandaged up.What caused me most inconvenience was my mouth. I could no longer eat. . . . When Poincaré next saw me after that he said to me:* 'I hope you no longer drive so quickly after this accident.' "

A stern taskmaster towards himself, he is no less

so to others, and does not allow his colleagues to pamper themselves. "*Weygand is like me! He has not taken a single day's leave throughout the War. Even after the accident to his hand he kept on working.*" He is proud of it. On the other hand, what sarcasms he pours out upon a man who has to take care of his health: "*It is not surprising! It is his own fault! He never takes any exercise, never moves a limb. In the morning he gets up, goes to his office, sits down, goes off to lunch at home, reads the paper, returns to the office*" (and Foch imitates with his fingers a walk with little hurried steps), "*spends his day in an armchair and hurries back home to put his slippers on. You see, most people throw themselves out of gear.*"

The problem of health is rather more complex than these over-simplified and sometimes contradictory arguments would tend to suggest if one took them at their face value. "*Do not make me say what I never meant,*" the Marshal would quite rightly retort to any such deduction. "*One must not generalise.*"

Physical health is one element of power. When he speaks of this question it is solely from this point of view that he considers it, and quite apart from any sentimental bias. He wishes to be strong, he needs to be strong—and all those who work with him. The only means by which that quality can be secured and maintained, and even increased,

possess importance in his eyes. Illness is a weakness, a mark of inferiority. It ought not to exist. He acts as if it did not exist. If he sees only one side of the question, it is deliberately. It is a rigorous, stern, pitiless system, not within everyone's reach. His own health enables him to adopt it, and that is enough for him. Like the man of method that he is, when he takes up any question, he sees nothing else.

The Marshal's point of view is seldom that of the average man, or what one would at first suppose. He sees further and clearer than most because he looks at no more than one thing at a time, and looks at it from longer range.

Meanwhile a few drops of rain began to fall: "*Once I did not like hot countries because, while you can keep out the cold, you cannot escape the heat. But nowadays I find, on the contrary, that one is never too hot. . . . One may die of cold but never of heat. . . . I should like to live in a sunny country. Rain!*"—and even as he is making a gesture of dislike, it begins to fall more heavily. I open my umbrella and shelter him. "*It is no use!*"; he simply quickens his pace. But the rain increases, and we are near the Square des Invalides, not a shelter in sight! It is windy. I try to protect him. He refuses. He breaks into an athletic stride. I follow him with my umbrella. He jumps across the puddles of water, runs across the street, then keeps

in close to the wall. All the time I am trying to shelter him, running along at his side, or rather behind him, as we are getting into the Rue de Grenelle at the hour when the Ordnance Survey is pouring out a crowd of draughtsmen and other employees, who get in my way, while Foch slips through and hurries on. We reach his hotel at a run. "*Many thanks! Run along with you!*"—and already he is across the forecourt. . . . And he is over seventy!

"THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL? I CANNOT DOUBT IT"

Indiscreet questions sometimes find their way into the mail which he opens each morning.

"What is your opinion on the immortality of the soul?"

"*For myself, I cannot doubt it,*" he pronounced categorically. And even as he framed this blunt reply, the Marshal tore up the letter containing the inquiry, not deeming it necessary to parade his personal beliefs. Not that he wanted to hide them; it is his custom to affirm them in his actions; and besides, they are publicly known. But those are subjects which one does not treat lightly, and which one could not, in his opinion, expose to public ridicule.

His robust, healthy faith neither knows doubt nor admits argument. It is the essential basis of his spiritual constitution. He owes it to a mother inspired by the purest spirit of Christianity, and to teachers who, throughout his youth, knew how to foster it, strengthen it, and plant it deep-rooted in him.

He is a fervent and convinced Catholic. Although he likes to go into a church to meditate, he knows

that God is everywhere, and that for a man of action to do one's duty is the best way of paying Him homage. His prayer is constant. It is no movement of the lips, but a complete self-surrender, a lifting-up of the heart. He practises his religion with a strict and watchful punctiliousness, but without parade or bigotry. He is no inquisitor; he sets the example, but each man around him may do as he pleases. He is no sectarian; he has no need to show his faith by extremes, wishing neither to give pledges nor to suffer influences. He is no mystic, moreover. To those who urged him during the War to dedicate his armies to the Sacred Heart, he used to reply: "*I pray to the Sacred Heart as I pray to the Holy Virgin during the month of May, or to Saint Joseph during the month of March. Is it He who will grant me victory? That is outside my province!*" And he would add: "*These folk mean well, certainly, but one cannot trust them. There is no knowing how far they might carry one.*" He has little relish for the exaggerations of the pious, and their need of miracles. To a Polish priest who had written to him: "It would be interesting to learn from your own lips if it is true that Saint Thérèse of the Infant Jesus, recently canonised, appeared to you at Verdun in the dress of a bare-footed Carmelite Sister and gave you guidance on the disposition of your military forces,

which helped you to gain the victory"—he bade me reply: "*All that is a fairy-tale.*"

Religion harmonises with his taste for order and authority, his demand for discipline and permanence, as also with his demand for nobility. He is too keen an admirer of the grand and mighty achievements of which religion is capable, to allow it to be diminished by pettiness.

On the contrary, he makes it a part of his patriotism. "*I always used to tell myself, in the old days, that I should not like to die till I could hang up my sabre, as a votive offering, on the walls of Metz Cathedral. Oh, I shall do it! I have promised!*" Such are the two torches which have lit up his spiritual life, and whose gleam is so real to him that I have seen him abandon himself—a rare occurrence—to his twofold emotion in the course of a patriotic and religious ceremony. It was at Colmar, one summer Sunday. At the open-air mass celebrated on the racecourse, whilst those present were taking up in chorus the refrain of a hymn, I saw that the Marshal joined with them in the singing of "I am a Christian." A few moments later, for the first time, at the close of a banquet, while the guests were chanting the Marseillaise, I saw the Marshal cry with them "*Allons, enfants de la Patrie!*"—an extraordinary act on his part, for which he half-apologises: "*To sing a full-*

throated Marseillaise in Alsace, when formerly one was forbidden even to hum it—I know no greater pleasure!"

That day his face was transfigured by the most noble joy, and I could read in it the true and sincere expression of his spirit, and pierce the mystery in which he too jealously wraps himself. "*Once, my motto was Knowledge and Conscience. I still keep it to-day, but now say, rather, Conscience and Knowledge. Yes, Conscience first, for that is what matters more.*" The priority of the spirit is indeed the result of his experience.

His authority, his influence, his greatest power, his finest resources come to him from this faith, which nothing nor nobody can shake. "*Happy are those who are born believers.*" He is one of them, and he is happy. He believes, and his faith affords him that certainty which he finds indispensable for life, since without it he could neither know, wish, nor act. It makes him positive. It gives him the joyous spirit of those who have hold of Truth, and thanks to it become great men of action, creators. He denies that he is an optimist, nor is he wrong; he possesses that faith which moves mountains and is a greater thing than optimism. That is what saves him from discouragement, doubt, unrest, hesitation, weariness and all weakness. That is what kindles and maintains in his eyes the inextinguishable flame which radiates energy, and which

clears the air around him of all meannesses. . . .

"My religious faith has been part of my character, and hence of my conduct as a man and a soldier."

"IT IS NOT I, BUT NECESSITY, THAT COMMANDS"

Each year the Marshal breaks off his holidays (which he spends on his property of Trofeunteuniou, in Brittany) to go and make his annual pilgrimage in the month of August to Gorcy (Meuse).

There, in one of those fields which are like so many others, but which the drama of 1914 has made sacred, a common grave makes a ridge in the ground.[1] There are wooden crosses. One bears this simple legend: "Germain Foch, Subaltern of the 131st Infantry, killed at Gorcy, August 22nd, 1914."

Before it, the Marshal uncovers and kneels. For a long moment he remains rapt in prayer, with no sign but a shaking of the head. This gesture, at once simple and significant, token of his grief in the presence of what cannot be healed, is deeply human in its unaffectedness, moving in its simplicity; and, coming from such a man in such a place, more eloquent than any words of sorrow.

His only son, a young man of twenty-five, fell there. There he lies, not divided from his fellows in

[1] Since then, in 1922, a monument to the dead has been raised.

arms. The conqueror of the War has not even been able to recover his relics.

The Marshal goes on his way again, pointing out a cross-road on the small-scale map. "*Stop at the lane leading to Mercy-le-Haut.*" Then, when the car pulls up, he sets off across country; and by a hedge—"*This is where Bécourt was killed.*"

Neither of his son nor of his son-in-law does one ever hear him speak. The day he heard of their deaths—he was at Châlons—he asked simply that he should be left alone for a while, and stayed shut up in his office for half an hour. Then calling back his officers—"*Now let us get on with our work.*" And on the days that followed, he would check with a gesture those who came to him with condolences, "I am sorry to hear that——" "*Yes, yes. Never mind that!*"

For what was to be done? Mourn—or conquer?

To remain absolute master of oneself, suppressing one's feelings, is one of the hardest and most vital duties of the Commander-in-Chief. He has to stifle all that might impair his efficiency, turn him from his goal, distort his judgment or weaken his decision. The death of his own beloved ones is a heavy blow. There exists another: the vision of thousands whom an order sends to their death. It is the weak commander, not the strong, who incurs vain sacrifices. The price of victory must be paid, but it is the latter who pays it less dearly.

"It is hard to see so many fall. The sacrifices were bloody, cruel. And the more cruel they were, the more clearly they laid on us a higher duty; they must not have been in vain."

The moral force of a commander is the most potent and vital element of his strength. This it is which allows the Marshal to say: *"Before taking such a decision, I look at it from all sides. If I determine it, it is because I have no option to do otherwise. It is not I, but necessity, that commands."*

"I DID MY BEST"

La Bruyère says: "One wins the heart of all, either by humouring the passions which rule their minds, or else by sympathising with the weaknesses which beset their bodies; therein alone lies the service which one can render them; and thence it follows that he who conducts himself well and desires little is the least easy to sway." The Marshal "conducts himself well and desires little." Passions have troubled him little. He has no other ambition than to do his duty as well as he can. He is incorruptible, because he never lets himself be led by any personal interest.

His tastes remain the same as they always were. His habits of strict economy have not changed at all. At his house in the Rue de Grenelle, rather than make himself an office on the ground floor equipped by the State furniture-store and looking on the garden, he has furnished with his old belongings, with well-worn armchairs, a room on the courtyard, and there he has established himself.

He is simple-minded, and sometimes reveals a charming innocence in the presence of certain basenesses of which he is unaware; for he has held himself sedulously aloof from all that could spoil

him. His private life is irreproachable, and, like his loyalty, is above all suspicion. His independence is complete. Having nothing to hide nor to reproach himself with, he can follow his bent without restraint, voice his opinions, judge men according to their worth and events according to their true importance, without having to trouble his mind with what lies below the surface nor with more or less questionable complications. That is the secret of the noble and dignified bearing which gives him distinction in all men's eyes, and which confers on him a moral weight that no title could give him. If he stands apart from the material advantages of this world, it is through moral superiority and not through indifference.

On hearing that the Roumanian Chamber had passed a unanimous vote granting an estate of more than two hundred acres with a château and farms to General Berthelot, in recognition of his services, "*Good! Very good! That's a fine gesture!*" he could not resist declaring. "*The Roumanians know how to be grateful. A fine thing, isn't it? . . . A gift like that, a country's recognition of services done: that's worth all the titles of nobility in a family. One leaves one's children something to bear witness to what one has done . . . An estate, or no matter what—something given in national gratitude: I should have liked that. When the English were making grants to their admirals and generals, Lloyd*

George sent me a message by General Du Cane[1] *that he had suggested making one to me, but that Clemenceau had refused, saying:* 'That is the business of the French Government.' *I received thanks and congratulatory addresses from the House of Lords and the House of Commons. . . . The Americans, too, thought of making me a general of the United States, with pay. But with Briand—we were in London when this proposition was made to me—we agreed that I could not accept, because of the English precedent. There has been no further question of anything . . . Gratitude is hard to carry. Democratic governments have no use for it . . . They don't want to perpetuate anything . . . And yet a house—some sort of hut, even—a national gift! . . .*"

It is a painful subject, despite the good-humour with which he looks at it. "*They turned to us in desperate straits . . . And now?*" He admits it, without complaining. A very delicate feeling of modesty imposes this reserve on him. He could only demean himself by any protest. The idea of making one does not even cross his mind. It is a calculation which does not appeal to him; he is too disinterested. He feels the difference in treatment, it is unpleasant to him; but naturally enough, he passes it by in silence, letting what lies below the surface of his mind be guessed merely from the

[1] Commander of the British Forces on the Rhine.

enthusiasm with which he approves of those who have the courage to give proof of their gratitude.

He carries his glory well. It is not a burden that weighs on him. He is too strong. It is not an advantage which he exploits, for he is too upright. It is not an incense which intoxicates him, for he is too much master of himself.

When praised for his victory, he replies to those who would like to know how he was able to gain it: "*I did my best.*" And if people press him: "*No, no! I was no more than conductor of the orchestra . . . a vast orchestra, of course . . . Say, if you like, that I beat time well!*"

The Marshal's moral strength is as solid and trustworthy as his physical. Moreover, he takes advantage of both as he does of the most natural elements in the world—air and light; and the power which he derives from them is increased yet more by the security with which he enjoys them.

In the normal business of life he is the simplest and least formal of men. Far from putting himself forward to attract attention, he will seek rather to pass unobserved, being ready to make any shift to shun public curiosity. Yet he is a soldier to the core, steeped in the customs of his profession. Before taking part in a review, he will crack jokes about his showy trinkets. "*I have more than twenty large decorations. See how this one looks! If I had to put them all on! I have even academic badges!*"

However, when required by the orders of the day, he will put on his dress-uniform with those of his decorations which circumstances decree (as few as possible, however), and when he has donned his white gloves, then he will be the Marshal fulfilling his duty—one of those which he likes least, no doubt, but which he will carry out like the rest with the same idea of doing what is required of him.

In official ceremonies, he knows the part he must play. On his way there—sometimes he has quite a journey to make—he will be the officer making the best of everything and bowing to necessities. As on manœuvres, his meal will be a snack. He will be content with the bank at the roadside for a resting-place. But from the moment when he must, he will be ready to stiffen up and assume a suitable attitude.

When from some whole populace, massed in some great square with all the dignity of historic tradition, a tumult of applause has suddenly burst out at his appearance, I have seen him steel himself against emotion. When the *Marseillaise* crashes out, he comes stiffly to attention with his hand at his cap, and remains in this position till the last bars, his eyes fixed straight in front of him. Then follows the review of the guard of honour. This is not merely a formal ceremonial. Though he walks swiftly past the men, he gives them a keen glance

and has an eye for their steadiness. When he reaches the Colours he halts, stands facing them, and draws himself up proudly to salute them. He never leaves a troop without saying a word to the officer in command; then comes a summary of his impressions, and a few words of thanks which contain no hackneyed compliment. For this short space of time he has been the Commander-in-Chief.

Afterwards, he puts himself in the hands of the organisers, quietly falling in with their arrangements and granting their requests. He receives kindly all the "special cases" that are presented to him, and shakes them by the hand, striving to put them at their ease by his simplicity. He enters the carriage whenever that is suggested. If he is asked to go on foot, he takes the head of the procession and walks between two crowds of people who push and jostle to see him, waving their hats, clapping their hands and shouting their welcome.

He goes on his way through their midst, most often, without any show of self-consciousness. He makes hardly any reply, setting himself to talk with those who accompany him, to keep himself in countenance. As a reasonable man he refuses to have his head turned: but he never fails to be appreciative. "*In the provinces or abroad, they always give me a splendid welcome.*"

He stops when they ask him, starts again when they wish, stands on a rostrum during endless

marches-past, without a moment of impatience or a sign of weariness. He knows that this is why he has come. He sees nothing but the object to be attained. He is fulfilling a mission, and shoulders all its obligations.

Before the memorial is the time for set speeches. The subject is the same always, as also is the complimentary speech addressed to him at the end. Some orators try to adopt an emotional tone. The Marshal listens to them thoughtfully, his eyes downcast. His firm profile assumes a deep gravity, his features betray him. His immobility and inward concentration are impressive. He receives thus the most high-flown praises, the most ardent thanks, the most rapturous applause. This is a noble attitude, so great in its modesty, so fine in its emotional restraint, so genuine in its sincerity, that it increases enthusiasm by inspiring it with a touch of religious fervour. One guesses that he remembers all that has had to be, for him to stand where he is. All turn towards him to bear witness of their gratitude, and to promise him their devotion. Then he lifts his head again; but his gaze, passing over the crowd, has lost itself away in the distance. The cheers are redoubled. Yet there will be an attentive silence when he begins to speak.

His extempore speeches are always short. He has a horror of the eloquence which consists of "*stringing phrases without knowing what one is going to*

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say, and parading words in the search for an idea." He does not aim at giving the illusion of a "*deep thinker,*" and makes fun of those who wish to create such an effect. A man of action, with a lucid and exact mind, he is not one of those of whom La Bruyère has written that "they are correct and tedious in their speech." On the contrary, sometimes he opens with some difficulty; yet he enunciates what he has to say with such stress, such conviction, that even truisms take on fresh force from the fullness of his voice and the authority of his gestures. Nothing stops him. If he happens to lose the thread of his ideas in some unfinished phrase, then his hand traces in the air marks of exclamation which help him to escape from it. Less master of his words than of his thought, if he finds some difficulty in expressing it he persists, he becomes heated, he is carried away . . . then, suddenly, a word springs to his lips; he has uttered it, but at the moment of uttering it he sometimes realises that it is not the right expression. He stops, draws in his chin, wrinkles his brows, reflects; he hunts for a more orthodox equivalent, finds none, hesitates . . . Then, hey, presto! off he goes. "*Yes, I tell you——!*" And he repeats, with justification, the word that is always clear, suggestive, ringing, right—in short, irreplaceable. Why should he be deprived of it? He lets himself be drawn on by it, he repeats it again, cites it afresh, isolating it; utters

it several times, to show that he is using it quite deliberately. Academic or not, what matter, if it compels attention, strikes into the mind, and becomes fixed in the memory?

This style, full of freshness and picturesqueness, made up of inspirations of the moment, gives to the Marshal's speech (which is inspired by a compelling conviction) a sincere and glowing warmth, the flame of which possesses charm, and whose tang is powerful.

Nevertheless, he thinks that the sequence of his phrases is slipshod and their form too careless, remembering only the trouble he has had in adjusting them and his difficulty in expressing them. Though he lays no claim to eloquence, yet when he has just turned out something to his liking he enquires with touching modesty: "*That wasn't too bad? That ought to do? That was all right? There weren't too many repetitions? . . . I'm so preoccupied with what I have to say that I don't know if I used the same words . . . I don't want to write out speeches of that kind . . . first, because as it is I can be shorter; and then, when you have a written speech they ask you for it for the Press, and I'm not anxious to leave that sort of thing to posterity!*"

Often instead of one of these spirited extemporisations (where his tricks of speech, so characteristic of his temperament, can find scope), the

Marshal delivers set speeches. These, after thought and preparation, he has written out in silence, correcting and polishing them.

When he has so worked over them, the set speeches which he reads are naturally less colourful, less spirited and less vivid than his phrases tumbled out haphazard. One is aware of study-work there. In each of them the Marshal aims at powerful expression of one of the ideas which are dear to him. To such an idea, he insists on giving solid foundations; he takes care over the structure, though without worrying too much over ornament, since he despises phrase-making. Here, the authority of the professor is added to that of the soldier. There are no fine shades; "*Here is what I have done, and what succeeded. Do likewise.*" Here are facts, definitions, truths, but few explanations. Perhaps there is too much austerity where, on the contrary, warmth is required. It is a brain speaking to other brains, leaving on one side all cheap tricks, "*sentimental couplets,*" and "*strokes on the big drum*"; seeking only the barest, clearest, simplest form. Gone now are the halting deliveries, but gone likewise the dazzling flights. So his set speeches, well-knit though they are, have little enough effect on the public. They are, moreover, less designed for the public than for a picked audience, which will read them coolly and be able to study them at leisure: products of the mind, weighty with mat-

ter, logical, solid, even austere, they are addressed to the intellect.

Further, the Marshal, with his usual simplicity and disdain of show, does not speak them. He reads them with the aid of his eyeglasses, from sheets which, however light they may be, weigh heavily enough on his hands to prevent them from making gestures. His voice becomes steady, no longer hammering upon words, no longer bursting out in claps of thunder. He himself feels no more at his ease. Applause takes him by surprise at a point which did not seem to him to call for it; and he awaits it in vain at the end of the next paragraph, where he had counted on evoking it. He would be the better for a little emphasis—but never! It is no cheap success that he is after. What is the task in hand? His speech is a lesson. There is less applause in the lecture-room than at a public meeting; nor are the issues further comparable.

The Marshal's set speeches are what they ought to be—neither platform-oratory, nor lawyer's pleas, nor moralists' sermons; but the words of a commander. His eloquence is like himself—sure, solid, healthy, forcible, full of logic and good sense.

"THEY ARE ALL HEROES, WHO HAVE DONE MARVELLOUS THINGS"

"What moves me most is a presentation of military decorations. There they stand—three, four, five, ten, twenty in a row. You ask the first: 'What did you do?' He tells you his story: 'I was there, I did so-and-so. . . .' At the second, there is the same question, and the same reply. The third, the fourth, just the same. They all speak in simple language of extraordinary deeds. They are all heroes, who have done marvellous things. . . . At the tenth, one is past feeling emotion. Such things are unheard of, there is nothing like them! When one reflects that one is in command of men like that, to what heights ought not one to raise oneself in order to command them worthily?"

In the same office where the Marshal had given General Weygand the *plaque* of the Legion of Honour after his Warsaw victory, and the *grand cordon* on his return from Syria, there was nothing more important on that day's list than the bestowal of a cross on a workman, blinded in the War.

This man, whose name was Martin, had begged to receive it from the Marshal's own hands. Although he did not know him, the Marshal had

agreed, and had fixed the interview according to the usual routine, for some morning between ten and eleven. We had been expecting him for several weeks.

The unfortunate man needed a guide. One of his neighbours, working on the tramways, at last agreed to devote a holiday to him, and they both presented themselves at the Boulevard des Invalides. The Marshal received them immediately.

Martin had donned his best clothes for the occasion, a suit of coarse blue serge, very clean . . . but indeed I do not know who could have chosen for him that tie of crude and gaudy colour which drew attention to his poor face with his sightless eyes, all red with emotion. His hands were trembling as he stretched them in front of him; and when the Marshal, who advanced towards him saying "*Good morning, my friend!*" tried to take one of them to shake it, their fingers became entangled before they could clasp them.

"*Where did you lose your sight?*"

"At Souchez, on July 14th, 1915."

"*Ah! Then you were in the 276th Infantry?*"

"Yes."

"*What division?*"

"I don't know."

"*Which was your general?*"

"I did not know him. . . . I had only just come."

"Well, well, that doesn't matter! Good! I am going to decorate you."

He pronounced the regular formula. . . . Slowly, two great tears fell from the closed eyes. The Marshal, deeply moved, no longer knew what to say after embracing him. With a fatherly gesture, at once to cheer the new legionary and to put himself in countenance, he gave him several friendly taps on the shoulder. *"Come, my lad! You've well deserved it! You're married?"*

"Widower." Choked by emotion, Martin could not answer.

"Any children?"

"Two."

"And what do you do?"

"Make brushes."

"Doing well?"

"Not very."

"Come, my lad! Keep your heart up!"

Then the big ruddy neighbour, who had so far kept in the background, could restrain himself no longer. "I've seen you too, General!"

"Where?"

"Up north, in 1915."

"Whereabouts in the north? I used to go right up to Flanders."

"Carency way."

Glad to have spoken, and yet overawed after shaking the Marshal's hand, he stumbled against his

friend in trying to take him by the arm to lead him away; he then managed to clutch him and drag him off, but made him bump into the door, since he was trying at the same time to salute, to return thanks for the two of them, and to get out of that peaceful office where the rich autumn sun was shedding both light and warmth, whilst the blind man, shut in his prison of darkness and silence, was allowing himself to be guided out without betraying a sign of his emotion. . . .

Such a reminder of the War overwhelmed us all. . . .

"THE POWER TO GET THINGS DONE CALLS FOR CERTAIN QUALITIES: INTELLIGENCE, JUDGMENT, IMAGINATION, DECISION"

"Some men have a superior intelligence, which shows them all possible solutions of a problem; but they do not know how to choose one of these, still less how to apply it. Others, if offered decisions, will choose the best, but will be incapable of showing initiative. The power to get things done calls for certain qualities: intelligence, judgment, imagination, decision."

Whatever situation is to be handled, "*there is always a problem to solve.*" It is important to face it squarely: "*Men shrink from looking at things as they are.*" This has always been so. "*That is the great principle! People are always imagining themselves in the days of the stage-coach. Someone mentions cars or aeroplanes, and you reply in terms of carriages! One gets into a rut. One tries to judge the new from a viewpoint crystallised in the old order of things.*" And in the same way: "*It is no use to tackle what is past, one must find out what is to be done next.*" Reproaches are futile; more, they are a weakness. Away with them, then! "*The past? It is what it is. We can do nothing with it. Let it*

alone. One must look at the present. What is it to-day—in such-and-such a year, month, day, and hour?" So the problem is stated. *"Don't drown yourself in details. Look at the whole."* One of his commonest gestures is that of *sweeping aside:* his hand comes down decisively and pushes away that which obstructs him.

Therein lies all the difficulty. You must neither let detail obscure your view of the goal, nor the goal prevent your seeing the whole question. The esplanade of the Invalides, which the Marshal was crossing as he explained his views on this subject, supplied him one day with this instance: *"So, I have to get to that street-lamp; I walk straight towards it, keeping my eyes on it, but that does not prevent me seeing the Invalides in the background, the trees, and the passers-by on either side."* And, besides, one cannot definitely decide what constitutes details. Something quite insignificant in one's plans, for example, may play a chief part in their fulfilment. Constant discrimination is to be employed. That is a habit to acquire. *"I have not a particularly good memory. Certain days, when important events took place, I remember as yesterday. The rest? I don't know. I did nothing of importance. No interest, there. I remember no more about them."* In the past, as in the present, to clarify the results is worth the trouble. The way is clear. No hindrances. One can go ahead.

His demand for clear vision is reinforced by a passion for accuracy, for certainty. "*Do not be content with what you are told. Go and see for yourself. I do not ask you what you think; tell me what actually is. . . . The facts exist. You must see them. They continue to exist. You will not eliminate them by sentiment.*"

When information reaches him through the medium of conversation, the Marshal "*filters*" the words, focusing his attention only on those which are worth while. "*Do not talk to me of confidence, of optimism . . . that is all sentiment. It has no real existence. They are only words. You can achieve nothing with them. One must be a realist. . . . Do not be satisfied with words if you do not wish to be repaid by disappointment.*"

The Marshal will not listen to anything which might distract his attention. Like all men of action, when he is doing something, he thinks of nothing else. But for all that his judgments are free from narrowness of outlook. "*One must take a wide view. You all know how I hate blinkers. One must not have an exclusively military outlook.*" Difficulties never perturbed him. "*We have seen plenty of others and have escaped them. We shall escape from these too. The only need is that we must take the trouble. We must have a programme and carry it through.*" Moreover, he does not like any attempt to influence him in any way. Thus,

to one of his officers who brought a scheme during the War he replied: "*I will not have anyone thrusting ideas upon me!*", waving away the papers. He insists on thinking by himself. His reasoning will be a homogeneous whole. His work proceeds rationally. No anxiety, no obscurity, but perfect simplicity; he repeats incessantly: "*It is not so difficult as all that. It is not hard. . . . That is all simple, let us not complicate things.*" Fortunately he has the gift of insight. Is it a gift? He does not admit the existence of "gifts." It is by work, by the deep study of problems, and by reflection that he has achieved the development of his power of judgment. Does he see clearly? Not always instantly. In such cases he has difficulty in expressing himself. He has not the adroitness of some men who succeed in deceiving others, while really deceiving themselves. He reviews the situation. . . . He explores it. Suddenly he sees! His mind, electrically charged by the labour of reflection and concentration, fills with gleams of light—a light which reveals itself in short phrases, often void of form, so compressed are they. Thus what has become clear to him escapes into speech, but very few can understand him without a wide experience of his manner and a prolonged familiarity with his reactions. For it is over! He has taken his decision before anyone has observed it! He has outdistanced all who were following him, even the

closest! Here he is, arrived at his goal. He has outwitted everyone! Clearly he has other channels than ours! He has resolved the problem while we have only just reviewed the data. One is tempted to think that he is deceiving himself because he has found the solution too quickly. He has taken a short cut while we were solemnly plodding the beaten track.

Thus, with a judgment whose vision is wide and clear, an objective grasp of the goal to be reached assisted by a sharp sense of realities and possibilities, an imagination always vigilant and fertile, a quick adaptability and a flexible talent for simplification, the Marshal has built up a combination of qualities founded upon deep and versatile knowledge, sustained by a judicious method of work, by constant reflection, by deduction faithful to the facts, and by a perfect balance springing from unfailing physical and moral health. These solid qualities, driven by a character like his, make his intelligence a kind of battery of enormous voltage whose powerful discharges, like lightning, illumine the sky and reveal the horizon. . . .

"It is a bad thing to change horses, especially in midstream." The Marshal loves this proverb and applies it. He keeps his colleagues as long as he can.

In selecting them he examines their proofs more than their promises. He quickly weighs up those who are thrust upon him by the accident of appointment or the exigencies of command. In both cases it is by their work that he considers them. What he asks of them is efficient service and performance of duty. That is all he will take into account if any occasion arises. With everyone in the Service he is exacting, even severe, but just. What he does not forgive is inaction and indolence. He extends his contempt to those whom he describes as *"second strings."* His greatest compliment is: *"He has energy."*

With what pride the Marshal declares: *"Weygand, Desticker, and Georges—those are the three men we have brought out during the War and we have not been mistaken in them.*

"Weygand! He is a wonderful executant who understands everything and has moreover an extraordinarily clear and accurate memory and a

consuming energy. At the end, when I left the reins to him, I was sure that he would do what I should have done myself. We were the inseparables. . . . So with Desticker and Georges. With them my mind was at ease. They could see and understand. I sent them out and they brought me back their reports. So it was after the gas attack before Ypres on the 22nd April, 1915. One knew nothing, one could know nothing, and if one waited till the next day, it meant a break through. I sent Desticker to Elverdinghe. He 'legged' it all night long. During this time Weygand and I at Cassel were warning the divisions at Arras. The next day, Desticker telephoned me: he had discovered a gap of four kilometres between the English and ourselves. We sent off the divisions for whom lorries and routes had been prepared. They arrived at the rate of one a day. The gap was closed!"

General Desticker, besides being a man of great integrity, loyalty, and devotion, possessed a clear and accurate mind, a sound judgment, a calm and noble temperament, as well as a profound knowledge of his profession, a sane and comprehensive outlook, with the courage, the vision, the passion for work and the grasp of detail necessary for their fullest utilisation.

Colonel Georges, a much younger man, arrived later. His clarity of vision and decision of judgment, his candour and tenacity, were so remarkable

that they made a strong impression on the Marshal. His native qualities, with their blend of benevolence and ardour, made him so congenial, as did his frank and youthful features, his keen glance, his clear eyes, his striking appearance of moral and physical health.

As for General Weygand, his character and personality were strongly marked, although it was his utter forgetfulness of self which enabled him to rise nearer to the level of his Chief and thus render to him, and to his country, services of inestimable worth. Like the Marshal, he was endowed with indomitable physical vigour, and like him could count on moral forces of the same degree, quality and origin; like him again, he was sustained by the most sterling qualities of intellect, fired by the same patriotism and brought up in the same principles—military discipline and the worship of duty. Once appointed to the Marshal's staff, therefore, he had no other ambition than to serve him with all his strength and all his faculties.

Possessing the highest conception of his functions as Chief of the General Staff, he determined to remain himself while subordinating himself to his Chief. Never yielding to violent reactions, he never hesitated to put forward his opinion, on whatever subject, with sincerity and courage, and with ever increasing skill and conviction, so long as the question was still open. But once the Chief

had spoken, his only concern was the execution of that decision, for which he knew that a complete abandonment of his own opinion was indispensable. But if sometimes in the beginning he still thought that his own scheme might produce better and more far-reaching consequences, he soon discovered by actual results that his Chief had been right. So his admiration knew no bounds, and he began to serve him, if not with greater devotion, for that was impossible, at least with the most honourable self-effacement. That is why, though he developed the capacity to grasp the Marshal's ideas even before their expression, or at least to understand them from a mere hint, when, exceptionally, he was mistaken, he at once admitted his error without further discussion, and sought to rectify it. Thus he acquired the strength to secure the success of the measure adopted by devoting all his energies to it.

This absolute submission, while springing from a recognition of superiority which one cannot but admire, bears no resemblance to that sycophancy which the Marshal could not have endured. If he was won by the character of his subordinate, it was because he had at once realised that his sole aim was to understand and serve his Chief. So between these two men grew up innumerable ties, binding them by a community of thought and feeling, by an identity of purpose and method. Yet at the same

time each retained his own personality. So much so, that it is hard to decide whose admiration was the more laudable.

To realise the relations between them, it was enough to see General Weygand talking with the Marshal, or to hear the Marshal speak of Weygand. The terms used were ordinary, but their intonation gave them a special significance: "*How young he looks! . . . There is something formidable about him, such energy!*" . . . and his face lights up; there is pride, enthusiasm, and warmth in his voice. "*Have you read his yesterday's report? . . . Only extracts? It is not enough. You must read it in full. It is magnificent. He writes with great accuracy, clearness, and vigour. It is full of matter, well weighed, considered, deeply thought out; it means something. He has studied the question . . . he writes with accuracy and brevity.*"

Nothing pleased the Marshal more than praise of his C.G.S. "*Quite true!*" he would agree, as if to elicit further eulogies. And how pleased he was to give details and reminiscences when questioned about their association!

"Did you know General Weygand before the War?"

"*Not at all. . . . Or at least only so far as an Army Corps Commander knows an officer in one of his regiments of whom he has heard excellent reports. I think I had never spoken to him. He was*

sent to me. From the beginning I took him with me all the time, instead of keeping him on paper work, and I told him everything. At night, when I was going to bed, he was still working, translating my ideas into definite instructions. With his astonishing intelligence, memory, and power of work, at the end of three months he knew all my views. . . . And we were never apart. That is not the usual method of work for a C.G.S., but it is the best. He can express my views as well as I should have done myself. . . . In 1922, at the time of the Bolshevik successes, when the President said to me, "We must send somebody to Poland," *I replied,* "*Send Weygand. He will do what I should. I will go later if necessary.*" . . . "But he has never been in command.". . . "*Send him and you will see! And you have seen! We were the emergency repairers. Wherever things were going badly, in Italy, France, Poland, we went. We were familiar with desperate situations. Nothing is easier. We arrive, see what is required. We give orders. We take determined steps. We stick to them and succeed.*"

Was there any need, then, to evince surprise when the papers announced on the 20th of April, 1923, the despatch of General Weygand to Syria as High Commissioner? Was not the situation there one of the worst? Well, then. . . . !

The night before, the Marshal, on his return

from the Académie Française, had shut himself in his office. Shortly after, in haste and in ignorance of the question at issue, arrived General Weygand.

He had abandoned the course of map-reading that he was conducting at the Staff College in response to an urgent telephone summons from the Marshal. A very long consultation took place between them. Nothing leaked out. The next day the surprise was complete. Everyone racked his brains to find the reason. Some talked of exile, others of a viceroyalty. General Weygand was not elated at the prospect. But the Marshal told him in confidence: "*M. Poincaré spoke to me about it at the Académie yesterday. He took me on one side and said:* 'Are you willing to let me have Weygand?'—'*If it is necessary!*' 'Yes. He is important, I know. He is your C.G.S. . . . We all know what he did in Warsaw. If he goes to Syria, we shall feel easier in mind.' "

The Marshal had already said, when there was a question of sending him to Morocco: "*Whenever there is an awkward situation, they will talk of handing it over to Weygand!*" And so it has proved.

On this occasion, moreover, the most malicious rumours were spread about: some regarded it as the removal of this too conspicuous General by appointment to an extraordinarily difficult and delicate mission in the hope that he would lose his

reputation. Others insinuated that it was revenge on him for not having approved all that was being done in the Ruhr. The Marshal despises these scurrilities; "*If I were the Government I should have chosen Weygand for Syria. . . .*"

"*Weygand! He is a paragon. He has the necessary range. Now was the time for him to spread his wings. It was not without many heartburnings that I let him go, but I had not the right to clip his wings.*"

How can these two men sever their connection? Within ten days they were to have left together for Poland and Czechoslovakia! Since August 1914 they have continually worked together.

On the 30th of April, 1923, all the members of the Inter-Allied Military Committee and many Poles came to the Gare de l'Est to say farewell to the Marshal. By general consent they left General Weygand to talk with the Marshal. They walked to and fro along the platform beside the train.

There followed a moment of keen emotion. The two inseparable colleagues were parting—one for Warsaw, the other shortly for Beirut.

General Weygand is rather pale and is chewing a cigar. The Marshal is gloomy and absorbed. At this moment of parting nothing seems to exist for him but the presence of Weygand. It is farewell to his most intimate colleague, his most devoted dis-

ciple, his best friend! He embraces him, kissing him affectionately on each cheek. He boards the train but remains on the footboard and leans towards him: "*Remember what I said to you just now.*" Standing in the frame of the door, waiting for the train to start, he remains sad and silent, but still thinking of some last word of advice, which he throws to Weygand in disjointed phrases, while the General listens with respect and approves: "*Be strong . . . alertness . . . variety of resources. . . . Roll yourself up into a ball . . . like a porcupine and then get to work! Eh?*" Each word is punctuated by a determined gesture. What could this last conversation have been? Was it like so many others on their daily walks? Perhaps the Marshal had not even expressed his regrets, and had only endeavoured to face the difficulties which threatened the situation, to point out to him a method of solving them. . . . The train is on the point of leaving. The Marshal comes down a step, leans over Weygand, keep his gaze fixed upon him; he seems to be smiling at him, but with a superficial smile to hide the profound pain which the separation causes him. What a wrench, after the War, after the sharing of so many fateful hours! Nothing betrays his emotion, which is, for all that, deep and definite. One guesses so much from his glances, which seem lost in a distant vision which embraces

both the past with all its memories, and the future with all its menacing clouds. . . . The train starts. One last word. But in what a tone! "*My* dear *Weygand.*"

WILL

"LEAVE IT ALONE!"

His sturdy frame, his quiet but firm and soldierly bearing, his staid but confident walk, his very grip of the ground when he is standing still, his poised and stable attitudes, his manner of lifting his head and of throwing out his chest, his decided, vigorous, and masterful gestures, the freedom of his movements, his air of independence and the pride of his carriage, the liveliness of his reactions, his abruptnesses—even his vehemences—his precise, rhythmic, and earnest speech, his polished fancies, his elliptic phrases, his commanding tone, both in giving orders and in affirming, denying, or contradicting, the irregularity of his features, his square jaws, the tightly closed lips, the prominence of the chin, the high cheek-bones, the furrows of his wrinkles, and clear eyes with their glances so deep and direct, so steady and penetrating—every detail of the Marshal's personality, both in the general impression of his presence and in the specific details of his qualities, habits, and way of life, gives to any observer, both on the first contact and in retrospect, that impression of authority, power, and assurance which emanate from those who go straight along on their way, who know why they

follow it, whither it is leading them, and pursue it without anxiety or hesitation, but with the conviction that nothing will stop them.

It is inevitable that he should give this impression—he whose life is a continual act of faith, and who has raised will-power to the grandeur of a system. By a perpetual effort even upon "*histoires de deux sous,*" he has developed his will to a potency whose exact degree he well knows, carefully maintaining it by constant practice, and sometimes using it, as a giant his strength, without thinking of the might which he is putting forth. All his acts, the most insignificant no less than the most important, are deliberate. This tenacious, active, and constant will is second nature to him. It is the unity of his life, the key to his character, the fundamental, effective, and decisive reason for his strength.

A proof of this is given by that large, vertical, strong, clear, and careful handwriting which he deliberately formed and has kept without change for about forty years. "*It dates from 1880! When I was appointed to the Artillery Committee and had to draw up reports, General Minot, a real eighteenth-century general, said to me:* 'You write very badly; one can't read it.' *I wrote like nothing on earth. At the École Polytechnique they write on their knees; in the lecture-rooms there are no tables. One develops bad habits. And, besides, while a*

lieutenant, I had not often handled the pen. Then I took to big pens, 'Rumboldtes,' and I began to write a very large hand; I was obliged to form my letters. I practised hard. Six months later the General said to me: 'You are beginning to be legible.' *And, further, that forced me to write slowly. Then one has time to reflect, to think of what one means, the words come to you, the phrases form themselves, one has no need to erase. . . . During the War, all my correspondence with Joffre was done straight off, and I wrote pages to him!"*

His striking personality displays itself in his daily contacts with the members of his Staff, from whom he always demands the maximum output. *"If you are capable, you must do the work. If you are incapable, you must say so and leave me!"* He does not think it advisable to distribute compliments or even to give encouragement: *"When I say nothing, it is because things are going smoothly."*

He knows wonderfully well how to keep you in working order, and it is generally recognised that discipline is extremely strict with him. He does not tolerate the least negligence. He has such authority that it would be superfluous for him ever to raise his voice. He does, however, sometimes raise it . . . to such a tone and with such an accent as to permit of no doubt or hesitation. And when the least opportunity occurs, he cuts you short even before you have had the time to finish, with such vigour

that you feel yourself at the same time supported and carried onwards in spite of yourself.

One must not take offence at anything the Marshal may be led to say in these circumstances. If he has gone too far, he will regret it, and will make it known without seeming to return to the point. He will ask the victim about his work and shake him by the hand. . . . As for apologising towards third parties: "*Well! I gave them a good blowing up . . . one must shake them up from time to time!*"

All those who pit themselves against vast problems, who shoulder enormous responsibilities, lead masses of men, and play with the fate of peoples as their stake—are they not fatally subject to these reactions? Since they are men, could one conceive them without such reactions? Doubtless he is not lenient, but he makes no effort to be so. He cannot endure wasting his time and energy in bringing himself down to your level. If you are not on his, you bore him. Nothing annoys him so much as failure to understand. Do not go and ask him for explanations, for he will clearly point out your mistake. And, "*let me add*" (as he loves to say), he is right. . . .

"*You must bring matters to me at once. You are always delaying and then coming along when it is too late. Waiting! You are there to serve me. You ought to come in anticipation. . . . Waiting for*

orders! You all do that. It is a mistake. You must come to your Chief and ask for orders." But avoid disturbing him! "*There is no reason to ruffle me at every end and turn.*" One has to remember that, to avoid being misled when he observes: "*There is no urgency. . . . Look into this case when you have the time, examine it carefully, and talk to me about it again.*" An hour later he asks you for the solution to the problem! . . . "*When one has started a case one should dispose of it. I do not like them to drag on. . . . Show me the file. One must have all the papers! One must carry the question through. One must finish it off!*"

Nevertheless, the Marshal can employ the subtlest methods to keep us on our guard:

"*What time does your train arrive?*"

"At seven o'clock."

"*No, sir! At six-fifty-two.*"

It was not accidentally that he puts this question, of which he knew the answer. He knows perfectly well what he is saying, doing, or intending. It is at one and the same time a test enabling him to judge the accuracy of the information one gives him and a method of indicating that one must not reply to him carelessly. If, on the other hand, he is satisfied by the accuracy of the reply, he observes: "*That is exactly what I thought!*"

If one is not absolutely sure of oneself it is better to remain silent. He cuts short your hasty judg-

ments: "*Do not be in a hurry to speak. . . . Reflect beforehand. One always gains by not speaking too soon. Come back when you know what you are talking about.*" Do not try to impose upon him, for he will soon have turned you "*inside out.*" He no more likes those who hesitate and let themselves be upset than those who try to impose upon him by their chatter. With his own will in a state of constant tension, he keeps all the rest of the world at arm's length. Delays, subterfuges, casuistries, gossip, are useless if not dangerous. The will needs truth.

But even those who are not subordinates must not imagine that they can do as they like. He gives them the most genial welcome, but on condition that they have "*something to say.*" "*What does he want with me?*" he impatiently wonders before granting an interview. And if one treats him to commonplaces or futilities: "*Do not trouble me with your poetic trifles!*" If one hesitates: "*Say what you mean. Do not beat about the bush.*" It is he who leads the conversation, constantly bringing it back to the subject which interests him—that is, what he wants to know. He gets hold of his caller by some precise question, then keeps him gripped in the vice of his hurried interrogations, and at last, having learned what he wants, lets him go.

There is a certain number of questions which

throughout his life the Marshal has deliberately and systematically refused to study—all those which might have turned him aside from the path he wished to follow. This state of mind is not the result of the narrowness of the specialist; he has no trace of military mysticism, and if he had entered any other profession he would have followed the same principles. It is, then, the consequence of his pushing his method to the extreme. Futile regrets, hollow dreams, vague ambitions, idle diversions, the Marshal dispels or despises. His thoughts are not troubled by them, His will is unaware of them. Similarly he dismisses or scorns all that touches upon politics or literature, however remotely. "*Leave that alone; it is not in my province,*" he tells you, not without a certain humour, if you wish, by an insidious question, to draw him on into one of those forbidden fields. And if you insist on discussing it: "*Very good, very good! . . . One knows all about that. . . . You know nothing about it!*" On these subjects he accepts the opinions only of competent specialists, or at least of specialists officially recognised as such. He has faith in them because he himself is a specialist in his own branch and knows that confidence can be placed in him.

To secure what he wants, he does not beg and pray, he demands. If need be he storms, threatens, thunders. He presses the opponent back into his last trenches, harasses him, besieges him, attacks him

from all sides; a failure does not discourage him; he begins again. If the position is too hard to capture, he will operate by means of successive victories: "*Obstacles! one attacks them one after the other and lays them low.*" Nothing can weary him until he has gained what he wants. If necessary he will change his procedure. He will employ diplomacy after having used force, but he will persist, will hang on to his idea; and, though held up, shaken, beaten, overthrown, he will not relax his grip, will hold on still more grimly, will persist, and in the end "*will carry off the prize.*"

If the application is to him, and he does not wish to grant the request, he will bring into play, to achieve his end, the same skill and energy with the same success; whether he breaks the sword to avoid a fight ("*One must know how to play the fool*"), or whether he merely refuses absolutely to reply, without consenting to give reasons, which, by opening the door to discussions, would weaken his resistance. To have some chance of success, one must employ his tactics. Above all, one must know exactly what one wants, lay hold on it tenaciously, grip it as he does with all one's strength, and will it, will it with all one's heart. Otherwise, in a trice, with his abrupt, urgent, and unexpected questions, he disconcerts you, disarms you, forces you to give ground, but not before he has made you show your hand! No polite formula, no subterfuge, no evasion

is the least use. You must bring out clearly and exactly what you are requesting. If you give him merely for a quarter of a second the impression that you are not perfectly sure or do not absolutely insist upon it, then you are dismissed on the spot and classified in the despicable category of the "*capricious.*"

Just as he knows the importance of the will, he can appreciate it in others, and, if he finds one of equal stature with his own, he admits it and respects it—sometimes even bows to it. It is taking a great risk to resist him, but if you succeed in convincing him he has the greatest respect for you. "*He knows what he wants.*"

Those whom he dislikes are the sceptics, the indifferent, the drifters, the undecisive, the dilettanti, or the complex—all those, in a word, whose character lessens instead of increasing their strength. He himself is a strong man who feels himself drawn towards every form of power and cannot tolerate weakness under whatever aspect: anxiety, sickness, sentimentality. His astonishing willpower, which is always at high pressure, always ready and eager to display itself, brooks no restraints and sometimes explodes in the effort of breaking them. With him all the springs must be wound up to their limit. Nothing lukewarm, nothing half-hearted, but rather an unwearying ardour. Any means seem good to him to drive you on more

quickly and forcibly, to whip up your energy, to increase your vigour, to brace your will. For that purpose he spurs you on, without allowing you the means or the time to go back, or to resist, leading you on to results so incredible that when you secure them you no longer consider—so extraordinary are they—all that he compels you to do to reach that point. He does not boast about it: "*It is quite simple.*" Strength to him is so habitual, so natural, that he expends it without measuring it, lavishes it without noticing it, without being weakened, without even seeming to suspect it.

"KNOW WHAT YOU *WILL*, AND DO IT!"

The will is an agent of execution. To fulfil its tasks with success it must stand out by its power, energy, vigour, continuity of effort, and tenacity. Those are qualities of the character.

Its function is to apply the decisions taken by the mind, with full knowledge of the case, after study, reflection, and choice. It is not therefore independent.

If, seeking to draw from an example quoted by the Marshal the conclusion which seems to you indisputable, you say to him: "One must have will-power," he will reply, with the tone which he assumes to show how far you are from having grasped his thought: "*No!*" Without giving you time to show your surprise, he will at once add to this disconcerting denial these few words of explanation: "*Will-power? Yes, of course. That is all very well, but it is not enough.*" He might almost say to you: "*Will-power? It is only a word.*" That would only be one of those habitual abbreviations of his which are so eloquent, but must be properly understood.

The method of the Marshal forms a connected whole. It is not a question of developing some sin-

gle faculty at the expense of the others, but of making them all function at the same time and in the same manner, to constitute by their united action a community of homogeneous forces, each supporting the others, contributing towards the same result, and acquiring by their union a power which their casual juxtaposition would not produce. In the case of the Marshal the will is the most conspicuous among these powers. The only principle which governs it shows clearly enough, however, that it is not the only power: "*Know what you will, and do it.*"

One carries out successfully only those orders which one perfectly understands. One carries them out even more effectively when one approves of them, or knows that they are dictated by certainties or necessities. So, to increase the power of the will, attention must be directed less to it than to its foundations. The "knowledge" and the "power" would be in vain if they did not serve as a basis for the will, to which in addition they attach the point of application and indicate the object: the result to be attained.

To know what one wills, then, is to know that basis, that point of application, and that object of attainment. The labour of supplying them, the effort to be put forth, are thus clearly defined, and therefore facilitated. "*It is enough to know what one wills, and that is half the battle.*"

So, in the War: "*Information? But it is useless; it is nearly all false; it is only afterwards that you know the truth. I never placed any reliance on it. One sees what one wishes to do. One sees if one can do it with one's available resources, and then one does it. . . . Information about the enemy! One never knows anything. . . . On the night of the battle of the Marne, when I was told that the Germans were no longer there. . . . I did not understand! History?* A posteriori, *one no longer places any faith in information unless one knows that it is correct; but, at the time when one had to make use of it, one did not know that! . . . You see, what is required is not to wait for information, but to know what one wills. One does what one wills when one knows what one does will.*" Like all great workers, he sees only one aspect of things at a time. When he has set himself a task, he consecrates all his efforts to it, all his faculties, all his time. He dismisses everything that might annoy, encumber, and distract him. It is the method of a strong man, who is master of himself, knowing what he wants and willing it with indomitable energy. The same system was also employed by Pasteur, perhaps the deepest of thinkers and the greatest of pioneers, when he left aside all that did not belong to the province of his researches and replied by truisms to questions on subjects outside his own interests. If such men were ready to

apply the resources of their intellect to other studies, they would succeed equally well in finding neat and original solutions to those problems which they prefer not to propound. They undertake the greatest problems when they could undertake the least. They share the opinion of the fabulist, himself in agreement with St. Thomas Aquinas, who recognises in "men of a single book" a force nothing can shake.

Moreover, these great men live on a level to which we cannot attain. Their outlook and judgment, their problems and solutions, are of a different essence from ours. What seems to us a drawback is for them an advantage. We criticise their idiosyncrasies, but they, by carrying them still further, make them the source of miracles. We praise their qualities and virtues of which they are unaware. Hence, clearly, friction must arise. "*Leave that alone. You do not understand it at all.*"

You entrench yourself behind public opinion.

"*Don't listen to him. What does the opinion of others matter? I pay no attention to it!*" Enough for him to know what he wills!

Besides, there is one condition which is essential: "*One must will, of course, but first one must know how to will.*"

In the eyes of the Marshal, once a decision is taken, nothing further exists than the one single

grim and implacable determination to carry it through. If he wills, it is not for the pleasure of exercising will, but because he has the knowledge and the power and there is no other way. "*They speak of my optimism. I am not an optimist. . . . But we must carry it through. . . . All the same, I have known moments when they were telling me:* 'We are done for! We shall all go under.' *Very well! what does that matter? We shall come through all the same, only we must work, we must will!*" His optimism: it is merely unfaltering will-power. . . . He knows that the man with the greatest power of will wins the day. He wills. He is the stronger. He is sure of it! Yet it is not mere obstinacy. He makes a firm stand against the world because if one maintains the pressure one often changes its opinions. "*Against facts one can do nothing!*" And he makes no attempt.

Finally, will must avoid words or else it crumbles away. When he gave the order to attack or to hold on to the bitter end, refusing reinforcements or reserves, he wished to hear no discussions. It was not that he was unaware of the difficulties, or refused to admit them; he knew them only too well, but in the crisis which had to be evaded what was the use of magnifying them? Was it not better for him to appear to deny them? In moments when a bitter determination is necessary to infuse into all an energy that nothing can weaken, he demands,

despite all opposition, the exercise of will-power. Then he repeats the same thing without wearying, he hammers home the "nail," he radiates energy by his enthusiasm, maintains it by his example. He concentrates all his power of will, and they listen to and follow him; thus he fills them with confidence, carries them along with him and succeeds.

To know how to concentrate the will is the meaning of character. The Marshal does not mince his words when he speaks of a leader who lacks this quality; "*Intelligent? Yes, yes! But no character. Wastes all his time criticising. Nothing will stop him from making an epigram. As a proof of my point, he never gets anywhere. Why, of course! Character is the chief thing. Intellect, criticism—pah! A donkey who has character is more useful.*"

To know how to exercise the will involves never letting oneself be stopped by anything. "*Difficulties? We have seen plenty of others and have come through. . . . The enemy? Don't worry about him. You know what you are doing. If you have sifted all the possibilities, whatever happens afterwards, keep on, and you will end by imposing your will on him. And make a thorough job of it!*"

In a word, to know how to exercise the will means to avoid using it up on trifles, and to apply it to the essential point with all one's power: "*To break the will of the enemy, that is the first principle; and to break it by an unexpected blow, de-*

livered with immense energy, is the first outcome of this principle. To defeat an opponent, a sword-thrust through the heart or a blow on the head with a club guarantees the result!"

Thus, force of will must be differentiated from obstinacy. It is not a question of willing any odd thing, by any odd method. If the will-power of the Marshal was always so effective, it is not because he was blind; quite the contrary, it was because he had reflected and reasoned. As he himself had no doubt as to the causes and foundations of his will-power, with what energy was he able to force it to its extreme limits?

"The qualities of the character are undoubtedly the most important with a soldier, but to what point can such moral energy lead if one is not well enough trained to know what object should be pursued and the paths which lead to it?"

If Turenne had the prudence and Condé the boldness, it was Foch who had the will.

"Every time that you have a task to fulfil, consider it carefully. Realise exactly what is demanded of you. But make a plan and give yourself a method for its proper execution: do not improvise. But the essential condition for the execution of your plan is dogged power of will."

"WHEN ONE KNOWS WHAT ONE WILLS, EVERYTHING BECOMES EASY"

(*From Mondement to Fère-Champenoise, through the marshes of Saint-Gond*)

One Sunday the Marshal wished to show Madame Foch, in company with General Weygand, the Marne battlefield, where, from the 6th to the 10th September, 1914, between Sézanne and Fère-Champenoise, at the head of the 9th Army, he held the invader and thrust back the German Imperial Guard into the marshes of Saint-Gond.

We had hardly left Paris when the names of the villages began to recall the War *communiqués*. But it soon became little more than heaps of rusty old iron, truncated trees, tumbled-down walls, standing along the edge of the road, in the bland sunshine, as witnesses of the struggle that had been.

While we were crossing the frontiers of this domain, where the Marshal was for a moment master, the land which he saved, I could not help turning towards him. His eyes were looking far away; memories crowded in upon his mind. For it was also in a car—but in what a different mood!—that at the end of August 1914 he came from Lorraine,

leaving his command of the 20th Army Corps on the outskirts of Nancy, to this very field of battle towards which we were speeding, and where in those days the destinies of France were at stake. Quite naturally, the Marshal began to recall that drama: "*It was on August 27th, at 9 o'clock in the evening, that I received the order from Joffre calling me to G.H.Q. I was then to the north of Vitrimont Wood, at the inn called 'Les Œufs durs.' They were giving me Colonels Devaux and Weygand as my Staff. Weygand was with the Hussars in the wood. I sent for him, and my first order was a farewell to the 20th Corps: 'General Balfourier will take over command.' On the next day, the 28th, we left at noon for Vitry-le-François, where we reached G.H.Q. at 5 o'clock. We crossed Nancy during a squall. Weygand took the opportunity to say good-bye to his wife, who had not yet left Lunéville. I had picked up, on my way to Vitry, Majors Naulin and Tardieu. On the 29th they gave me Requin, a captain, and I had with me Ferrasson, my A.D.C. I fought the Marne with an incomplete Staff.*"

Actually, in the course of its retreat after the battle for the frontier, the 4th Army had shortened its line on its right to defend the crossings of the Meuse, and, as the 5th Army had done the same on its left in order to help the British Army, between these two armies a gap had been created of which

a German army, under Von Hausen, was threatening to take advantage in order to dislocate our arrangements. General Joffre, having no available reserves to ward off this danger, had adopted the bold plan of regrouping his forces. Withdrawing from the 4th Army the 9th Corps (comprising the 17th Division and the Morocco Division) and also the 11th Corps in order to make up, with the 42nd Division, two reserve divisions, and the 9th Division of Cavalry, an Army detachment, he had sent for General Foch to take it over.

"*I first had to find my troops. When, on the 29th, I reached the 4th Army, General de Langle cried out at the sight of me:* 'It is Providence who has sent you.' '*All right! all right!*' *I replied.* '*We shall see.*' " Thereupon without delay he put himself at the head of contingents which had already been largely exhausted by severe battles as well as by several days of retreat, and which even that very morning had been in contact with the enemy; and at once he gave them the order to attack, knowing the constructive and inspiring advantages of taking the offensive. In a few days the new army was completed and full of enthusiasm. Indeed, on the 5th September it was in occupation of the line Sommesous-Fère-Champenoise-Sézanne, in contact with the two armies which supported it on either side, and ready for action.

In the order for the general renewal of the offen-

sive, on the 6th of September, the 9th Army was only to cover the right wing of the armies attacking Von Kluck. But events, or rather the enemy, gave to this position a considerable importance. It had to sustain the bitter attack of the army of Von Bülow, pivoting on its right flank in order to confront Paris, and that of the army of Von Hausen, which directed against it an ambitious attack. So the success of the battle was going to depend on its resistance.

The whole nation shared as one man in the agony of suspense. Behind the battle-line emotions ran riot. The local inhabitants were asking whether the battle, whose violent cannonade they heard drawing nearer and nearer every day, was not going to end in a reverse which would throw them at the mercy of the invader. "*I was spending my days at my Battle H.Q. in Pleurs. Every morning after my departure from Plancy, where I had my headquarters, the people with whom I was billeted were seized with fear and made their preparations for flight. Every evening when they saw me return to my lodging, they unpacked their trunks. But the next day they began again. That lasted until the 15th of September, the day when I left them to set up my H.Q. further forward, at Fère-Champenoise.*"

We were reaching the edge of the plateau and the chalky plain of Champagne, with its innumer-

able little fir woods, which extended before us as far as the horizon. The Marshal pointed out the direction of Plancy and that of Pleurs. At the bottom of the slope Sézanne suddenly appeared. The cars descended the slope, and we reached there in time for lunch.

The rumour of our arrival spread. It was impossible, on leaving the hotel, to get as far as the market-place to visit the church. The Marshal tried to escape from the demonstrations of the inquisitive bystanders, but could not help graciously welcoming them as they appealed to his memory of those tragic hours. "*Let us move on. We must think of serious matters!*" The Marshal had arranged a programme, and the important thing in his opinion was to follow the route from Château de Mondement through the marsh of Saint-Gond to Fère-Champenoise, the rampart, the moat, and the breach, which summarised his part in the battle of the Marne.

On the 7th of September, connected on the left flank with the 5th Army, which was making progress, and on the right flank with the 4th Army, which had great difficulty in holding its ground, the 9th Army was compelled to execute a swinging movement around the pivot constituted in the west by the obstacle of the marshes of Saint-Gond, by the heights of Montgivreux, Mondement, and Allemant. When, in the course of the day, fluctua-

tions occurred on the one side and the other of this rampart, its strength ensured the safety of the manœuvre. All our efforts were devoted to its defence.

During the course of the 8th, the turning movement became even more pronounced. A gap opened on the right wing, for the 11th Corps had to fall back before a violent attack launched before dawn and had to abandon Fère-Champenoise. The situation was grave. If the centre of the 9th Army split up, it meant a break-in by the enemy on our rear, the splitting of the French Armies into two fragments—in short, imminent disaster. Before the end of the day General Foch succeeded in launching a counter-attack to stop this movement. It did not attain its objective, Fère-Champenoise, but it held the enemy in check, and even thrust him back at some points.

In the centre it was the part of the Morocco Division to take back its line as far as Mondement and entrench itself there to hold the ground. Fortunately, the gap on the right was closing up. As for the 9th Army, on the evening of the 8th of September the battle resolved itself into an attempt to maintain ground on the heights of Mondement and to regain Fère-Champenoise. A characteristic Foch method: extreme simplification, but containing the essential feature. "*When one knows what one wills, everything becomes easy. To stop up gaps one fills*

them up with mud. . . . It is incredible what one effects by this system." He forbore to mention all the further conditions necessary for success: Grasp of the situation, military knowledge, bold imagination, and energetic will-power. But with what could he fill the gap? At all points the Marshal was at grips with an enemy of superior numbers. For three days he had been maintaining his position, but under what difficulties! The only body of men strong enough to attempt an attack of this magnitude was the 42nd Division. It was engaged itself, and even more seriously, on the extreme left, where, furthermore, it was advancing *pari-passu* with the 5th Army. In order to have this at his disposal, General Foch during the night of the 8th–9th made arrangements by telephone with his neighbour on the left. General Franchet d'Esperey, full of despair, with the most perfect sense of the comradeship of arms, gave him one of his Corps, the 10th, which could then take over the task of the 42nd Division. Meanwhile, it was still necessary to transport this division from the left to the right. The success of this rail movement demanded that the 9th Army should hold its positions throughout the day of the 9th. Now, on the morning of the 9th of September, at the moment when this transfer was taking place, the Germans launched a fresh assault with great energy and captured the Château of Mondement. If only they reached the ridge south

of the height, the plain of Champenoise was at the mercy of their guns, the movement of the 42nd Infantry Division was impossible, and the threat which had hung over us the night before would be realised and complete our ruin.

How could we stop without emotion before the gate of this Château of Mondement? Before passing through it, the Marshal took us along the surrounding wall to find the gap made at short range by one of our 75's to prepare the attack of the 77th Infantry, which restored to us the possession of the Château only on the evening of the 9th of September. Then the Marshal crossed the court of honour, without stopping before the walls which are still riddled with the fateful marks of gunfire, and, as he did so, he reminded us of the unfortunate fate of the residents, who had to escape on foot in the night, their car having been blown to bits by a shell and their last horse killed in the stable. "*It was General Humbert, with his Morocco Division, who held the Heights of Mondement. He had established his Battle H.Q. in the Château. . . . Humbert was calm and balanced and full of energy. He saw clearly that wherever he happened to be the troops were reassured.*" In this Château the Marshal feels at home. He knows all its corners. He is attracted by one, the angle of the northern side, where, near the battered, but still standing, tower, one has a view of the whole panorama of the battle. "*I was*

here with Humbert; with our field-glasses we could follow the progress of the contest." Pointing his stick, he indicates Toulon-la-Montagne in the distance; and, almost at our feet in the marsh of Saint-Gond, the ditch of Petit Morin, that one would never suspect; Broussy, Rouves; Oyes, which was so sternly defended; and the ridge of Poirier, from which so many German attacks were launched. Before this panorama the Marshal stands in meditation. He lives the struggle over again. But he does not describe it. You have to guess—with a shudder—by his mere method of showing the position of the enemy forces, of indicating the forward rushes of the line of riflemen, to define the line of advance of an attack. "*Weygand, what time did the attack begin?*" The whole battle-ground springs into life, and one is conscious of the danger. One shares in the advance. The Marshal speaks in staccato phrases as if he were giving orders. He moves from one point to another, searches the horizon with his glance; the working of his thoughts betrays itself by the abrupt, unfinished, but powerfully suggestive, disjointed phrases. A single word calls up a whole situation. A single figure throws a flood of light upon it. A mere gesture explains the battle strategy. Every moment the Marshal appeals to the unfailing memory of his C.G.S.: "*Weygand, was it not Blondelat's Brigade which fell back on Allemant?*" This is not the moment to distract his

thoughts by asking him questions, nor to worry him with personal impressions. He has little liking for the tourist attitude. He turns a deaf ear, or replies: "*I do not know—ask Weygand.*" A compliment receives no greater welcome. "*No, no! spare me that!*" But one can display one's admiration, if one finds the right way to express it, by stating a precise fact which he can approve with an air of satisfaction: "Did you not have six German Army Corps against you?" . . . "*Yes, that is so.*" So far from feeling at all vain about his early feats, he seems to regard all that he did as perfectly simple. "*On the Marne? Yes, that went very decently; we put up by no means a bad show.*" Yet his modesty is not complete self-effacement, and when necessary he can claim that he was of some importance, even though he makes the claim in his characteristic manner: "*We did not make too many blunders!*"

The Marshal is no more disturbed by the memory of that drama, of which he was the hero, than he was long ago by the drama itself. With befitting gravity he contemplates its fluctuations in an objective spirit which makes him prefer the satisfaction of the results achieved to the joy of victory for its own sake. He carefully examines those results, rather seeking in them useful lessons than flattering impressions. Instead of surveying himself with complacency, he analyses himself con-

scientiously, and thus rises above those very feats which have already raised him so far above mankind.

On this pedestal of Mondement, the Marshal appears before us in the stature of a giant. We look upon him in no ordinary light. On this height which overlooks the marshes of Saint-Gond, near to this Château so fiercely disputed, where the presence of the victor calls back to life the shades of the brave who defended it—to hear this victor himself explain to you the difficulties of his task and show in the most unassuming manner how he overcame them, strikes you with profound surprise. Meanwhile, amid the silence of this enclosure, once filled with heroic combat, an almost physical discomfort sweeps over you from the testimony borne by the sun and enforced by its rays, which are as fierce and oppressive as in those days of 1914. With no attempt to hide the emotion magnified by her pardonable pride, Madame Foch, anxious to learn and curious to see all she can, plies him with questions, and gazes, reluctant to leave, at the stones of that tomb where France, once buried, had returned to life.

But it was now time to go down to the famous marshes of Saint-Gond, a long and narrow belt of half-dried ponds covered by treacherous grasses, in which one sinks, once off the track of a few causeways which run across it. On the banks of

this depression on the 6th and 7th of September, at the price of unparalleled efforts, the 9th Corps held its ground against all assaults. We go slowly along, with pauses which seem like Stations of the Cross memorable for some feat of heroism or painful memory. Near one dip in the ground he said: "*Whole battalions plunged into this in the belief that they had found a shelter. It was a furnace. They melted like wax.*" Further on: "*Over there was a farm of which there is now no trace. It was captured and re-captured I don't know how many times.*" Again, after crossing a tiny bridge, never dreaming of the part it played, he told us: "*That was the only crossing. We had to guard that at all costs. Corpses piled up in heaps, witness to the severity of the struggle. It became impassable.*" Then at Aulnizeux: "*A battalion took this village by storm, but had to abandon it.*" So at Bannes he explained: "*That's where General Besse, with his artillery, stopped the onset of the German Guard.*" All these feats of arms, even the disastrous ones, deserved a tribute of respect. "*Those sacrifices were not useless, any more than the others which were occurring in the very same hours along the whole front.*" Yet at the actual time of occurrence they might have seemed so, since on all sides the situation looked hopeless: the obstacle had been crossed, the enemy were shelling the rampart of Mondement, and threatening to overthrow it or to turn

its flank through the open door at Fère-Champenoise. But General Foch, with unshakable tenacity, never lost heart because he willed not to lose heart: "*When beaten I said to myself: 'I shall be beaten for four days or five days if necessary, but I shall always remain in being.'*" That was exactly the paramount need. If the enemy was attacking with this desperate energy, it was because he felt the imperious necessity of a success on his centre in order to save his disorganised right wing. The Officer Commanding the 9th Army did not let himself be hypnotised by local accidents; he saw the campaign in its entirety and judged accurately. "*I said to my troops: 'The Germans are at the extreme limit of their efforts; they are exhausted and surprised at our resistance. Disorder reigns among them. Success will belong to the side which outlasts the other.' And I gave everyone the order to attack, whatever happened.*"

In the meantime we also had reached Fère-Champenoise. (Whenever one of us said *La* Fère-Champenoise, the Marshal corrected him with: "Fère-Champenoise.") The day was near its end. Almost at the same hour on the 9th of August the last preparations for the last counter-attack were carried out. Weygand was on the spot to organise it. It was due to start at *17h. 15m.* "*The G.O.C. 9th Army insists with the utmost urgency that the offensive which he has laid down shall be carried out*

in the most energetic manner." Despite so much activity, firmness, and daring, this attack did not achieve its purpose any more than that of the previous evening. But at least it kept the enemy at a respectful distance. The 42nd Infantry Division, continuing its transfer, was able to reach ——. The next day, September 10th, the perseverance of the G.O.C. 9th Army was rewarded by the capture of Fère-Champenoise. The entry which he made on that day in the afternoon was for him the tangible sign of success. He was anxious to-day to show us the first town that he won back. "*You remember, Weygand, the state in which the Germans left it. It stank. But we were extremely glad about it, weren't we?*" And he took us along to the town hall to find the spot where he passed his first evening of victory. "*Weygand and I went to sleep on horrible mattresses. There was a terrific uproar. We could hear people going up and down that wooden staircase which was over our heads. There was no chance of sleep. At 1 o'clock in the morning they came and disturbed me to tell me that I had been appointed Grand Officer of the Légion d'Honneur. I replied: 'What do you suppose I care about that just now? Let me sleep.' At 3 o'clock in the morning an emissary from General Joffre came to bring us cigars. I said to him: 'Put them on the mantelpiece,' But he also brought some blankets. They were priceless. We each took one and rolled*

ourselves up in them. It was cold; it was in vain we put on all our coats; we were frozen all the same. . . . But no one brought any news." Instead of the traditional glorious picture of a setting sun empurpling with its fires the flags captured from the enemy, we see a dingy shed where victorious leaders of armies can get no sleep. How much nearer to human truth are these unvarnished recollections: after such days of struggle in which the brain was paramount, the body, which has been abused and neglected, suddenly demands attention and brooks no refusal. To be able to sleep at last! Could not victory at least allow the victor a little sleep?

But the Marshal could not stop to pay much attention to the anecdotal side of things, even if the importance of the circumstances reflects a certain grandeur upon him. He takes a wide and deep view. He prefers a bird's-eye view of the whole to details of the struggle. And how, on the banks of the Marne, could he refrain from talking of the Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies, "Papa Joffre"? (The Marshal when speaking of him, like everyone else, uses the familiar term which expresses the affectionate gratitude of the whole nation.) "*He is extraordinary. His characteristic quality is a very sound judgment. But he does nothing on his own initiative. He must have things proposed to him, have a plan prepared for him; he can*

make others work; he himself weighs up and decides. . . . He never has anything in front of him on his desks, not a file, not a map; he never writes. He does not say much, nothing makes him move an inch. At one time he was called 'The Buoy.' . . . Waves, storms? He remains always the same! He was a tower of strength. On the 27th of August the situation was really agonising. Dangers on every hand. We were in the dark! But he preserved his admirable calm. His example carried weight. Around him at his H.Q., despite bad news, there was little anxiety, still less panic! Only a calm and placid atmosphere, in which decisions were taken coolly."

"Then it was really he who won the battle of the Marne?"

"*Certainly, it was his doing. He had made preparations for it . . . he simply translated them into fact. . . . He had grasped that the action had been begun badly, so he suspended operations while he corrected mistakes and repaired weaknesses. He reorganised the higher command; altered the distribution of his forces, and then awaited the moment for energetically resuming the offensive he intended. The battle of the Marne was certainly a great victory. . . . Joffre was the right man in the right place; he knew how to avoid the knock-out. . . . And, further, he saw eye to eye with the Government. That was hard enough!*"

"Then what about Galliéni?"

"*Galliéni? He said he thought the moment to strike had come. Joffre, who wanted to retreat to the Seine, deferred to his opinion. But, all the same, it was Joffre who took the decision. If he had been beaten, no one would have taken the blame for the defeat. . . . Let me add: that if we had not had him in 1914, I don't know what would have become of us.*"

And as to the question of the higher command? During the long years of preparation for the War the Marshal had devoted all his investigations to it. It was one of the dominant ideas in his mind, at which he was always working. At every opportunity he took it up afresh for further study, turned it this way and that in all its aspects, explored all its consequences, in a search for perfection untainted by the least thought of personal disparagement. His strict efficiency is always free from malice:

"*One must see mistakes to avoid repeating them. After the war with Italy in 1859 they simply forgot everything, so delighted were they to have got off so lightly. You know what was the result of that? . . . Pride is the worst of counsellors. . . . After the Marne, most of the generals were so 'flummoxed' at having won that they did not dare to do anything more. . . . They were afraid that the situation might change. . . . I sent ahead a*

general with a Cavalry Division to pursue the Germans. He stopped at the first bridge,[1] *and formed up 'en cercle' with a Cavalry Corps. . . . When I arrived I asked him, 'What! Are you still here? You have not advanced?'*

" 'No!' *he replied,* 'they are much too strong for me! They are overwhelming. . . . I can't sabre them all.'

" *'But that,' I replied, 'is not what I am asking you to do. You've got guns; you ought to have used them. . . .' When I saw that he didn't understand at all, and that there was no way of making him understand, I put him out: 'Off with you! We shall never understand each other!' They daren't do anything. . . .*

"*They ought to have pushed and pushed! They refused to believe in their success. That the ordinary troops should fail to understand it, I am not surprised. But those who led them? Intolerable! . . . During the night of the 11th to 12th I saw an Infantry Divisional Commander who had received orders to advance and had halted before Châlons. He did not dare to enter. And at the 'Haute-Mère Dieu'* [2] *there was the Prince Royal of Saxe and his Staff having a final jollification. He might have wiped up the whole lot! . . . I went myself to shake them up, to lead them with a stick.*

[1] Viz: on the Marne.
[2] A hotel in Châlons.

Ah, if only I had been there! A column to right, a column to left, another in the centre, and I could have caught them all! . . . (His eyes sparkle at this, but his features immediately contract again.) *Yes! One has to lead them with a cudgel. They were superb generals in peace-time, fine soldiers, who knew everything except war.* . . . *The war they had prepared for, in manœuvres, was a perfectly conventional war. But what they were called upon to do wasn't in the regulations. Poor old regulations! They're all very well for purposes of drill, but in the hour of danger they are no more use.* . . . *You see, it is not enough to learn the regulations; you have to learn to think.*"

By his destructive comments on the pursuit, no less than by his constructive comments on the battle, the Marshal had just given us an illustration of his *Principles of War*. In this battle of the Marne, where for the first time he was able to put his precept into practice, the success of the Soldier confirmed the teachings of the Professor.

Fère-Champenoise will be able to boast of having been the cradle of the unified command, because it was there that he who was one day to hold that command proved that he would be worthy of it. He had the power to see clearly, to hold on at all costs, to take a strong and simple decision—that of counter-attacking Fère-Champenoise—and to apply his force of will until the aim was achieved.

On our way back—along the Route Nationale from Fère-Champenoise to Sézanne, which served as the axis for the counter-attacks—the Marshal stopped our cars at the cross-road at Linthe and asked for the maps:

"Tell me, Weygand, what happened at Saint-Loup? . . . Do you recall the G.O.C. of the 9th Corps? . . . At what time did Grossetti pass that point?"

They were alone together, at the side of the road, facing the plain, looking at the fields which the 42nd Division had crossed in its flanking march. . . .

ACTION

"ONE MUST ACT; IT IS ONLY THAT WHICH PRODUCES RESULTS"

"To act. . . . What is the real question? One must do *something! . . . One must act! . . ."* The whole essence of the Marshal breathes in that word, that question, that imperative counsel, which he repeats almost to the point of wearying his hearers, because action represents for him the indispensable aim and object of his method, will-power being its implementing force, knowledge and intelligence its foundation. *"Inaction,"* he says again, *"is ankylosis, paralysis, death."* It could not be put more plainly. It is in activity that he experiences that supreme (and so rare) satisfaction of being entirely himself. When he realises his aim, he realises himself. For him it is the best way of expressing his thoughts, of proving his intelligence, of exercising his will, of evincing his views, of verifying his judgments, of giving a shape to his decisions, of living his life.

The Marshal expresses himself in action as Ovid expressed himself in verse—entirely naturally, finding no obstacle, even unable to imagine himself behaving in any other way. Quick, keen, impulsive,

he is a "condenser" of energy whose inseparable function is movement and impetus.

Every phase of the man betrays this natural disposition: his piercing glance, his mobile features, the high-strung tension of his body, always leaning slightly forward, ready to explode, to burst. His temperament, overflowing with vigour, urges him to display his thoughts by the twofold means of words and gestures. The latter are expressive and characteristic: whether with fist closed he extends his arm as if to support a proof or clinch an argument, to overthrow an obstacle and clear the way; or whether he raises his palm as if to stem a flood of eloquence, or with the back of his hand sweeps aside an objection, and ends up by bringing down the edge sharply, as if to cut short a discussion. His words, by their rapid surge, their swift and vehement outbursts, their brevity and speed, are no less expressive, urging on with torrential eloquence, without affectations or periphrases, each like a bullet hitting the target. So, too, his abrupt interruptions in discussion, his tumultuous retorts, the animation with which he adduces his proofs, maintains his statements, demolishes opposition, overthrows interpolations, and sweeps the waverers off their feet.

For him, action is a stimulant. During the battle of the Somme in 1916 he went at such a pace that one of his companions several times asked him:

"But, I say, aren't we going to stop?"

"*No! No!*"

"You'll drive me out of my senses!"

Then he adds: "*I always thrust swordsmen in the back!*" And it is no figure of speech.

"Activity! Activity! Speed!" Napoleon used to write at the bottom of his orders. "*Without delay,*" the Marshal would add to his. "*Weygand declares that that is the expression which I used most during the War.*"

So he spends himself without counting the cost. A single-minded soldier, preserving complete detachment from all that is outside his duty, accustomed to endurance, free at once from prejudice and from emotion, nothing can stop his enthusiasm. He does not know the meaning of fetters, and would not endure them if he did. Neither success nor reverse, for him, is reason for a pause. One must push on, to take advantage of the one or to neutralise the bad effects of the other.

Neither confidence nor depression possesses for him the significance which the world usually attaches to them. "*All that is sentiment. It has no real existence. It is like optimism; mere words. . . . One has the means, and one must bring them into play. One is not more stupid than the rest. Why should one not succeed as well as they? Better, indeed! You must try to make use of the available means. And you find out. If you do not find out, it*

is because you have not made a proper search. You must seek more vigorously, and you do *find out; you always find out if you take the trouble. If that does not work, it is because you are mistaken. Then you must look for something else. Nothing succeeds of its own accord. You succeed only by what you* do. . . . *Confidence? A broken reed! And then, when it has broken, you have nothing to fall back upon. If you make use of the means you have, they are still there. And you try to discover why they have not brought you success, you 'tuck them up' a little tighter, you employ them differently. That is how things really are! One must be a realist; with words one can do nothing. Do not believe that the Germans are stronger than you. They have their defects, even they. Their soldiers are not better than ours: on the contrary. Well, then?*

"*I have always thought that by doing what was necessary one secured results. . . . But one must* do *it! When things go badly, it is because there are weaknesses. Seek out those weaknesses; cure them. It is not the fault of others if things go badly. Do what you have to do. People who do not budge, who do nothing, get nowhere. If you do nothing, do you fancy your work will do itself? Get to work! I assure you that all will be well. But get to work in good earnest. And for that you must survey the problems objectively. Why! the Germans had a true sense of objectivity. In 1870 espe-*

cially. . . . But it is true that, on that occasion, circumstances swept them along and helped them. All the same, they knew what an objective education was. . . . Not we! We were mad on our rank and file!"

"Consider your rank and file! Behold your rank and file!"

"*The Germans saw how to use* their *rank and file. . . . After Saint-Privat, the artillery of the Prussian Guard went and refitted at Sarrelouis and returned to the battlefield. It had done 180 kilometres. Its horses were worn out, but that could not be helped. . . . We? We must not spoil our horses! But I tell you, one must get there—with whatever one has to bring.*"

For there should be no question of acting for the mere pleasure of acting. "*One must act, because it is only that which gives results.*" If action is the indispensable end and aim of the Marshal's whole theory, its result is its own justification. It is that result which is of importance, it is that which must be attained. To act in a vacuum would be a contradiction in terms. "*One must translate theory into fact; one must attain one's end.*" The pragmatism of the Marshal gives to his theory of action its whole value as a process of achieving results.

A defeated general will vindicate his good intentions in attempts at personal justification, and will excuse his defeat by pretending that he had

firmly grasped the idea which subsequently secured the victory.

The Marshal does not conceal his opinion of this pretence:

"*The idea! The idea! . . . But I laugh at ideas! That is not the important thing. One must act; one must achieve. It is only that which counts. Everyone has ideas. Everyone has the idea of victory. And what then? Suppose they do not achieve it? One judges people by their achievements. The intention is not enough. Everyone has good intentions. They must be put into practice. I don't say that one must not have ideas. That is not the point. One must have a line of conduct, a strong line, and hold on to it, but for that one must have the means, and that is where one must have ideas, in order to find those means. . . . Does it fail? How proceed? One must have imagination! One must have ideas, then, and activity. . . . I really believe that! But ideas . . . that is not enough. One has always foreseen everything; one has ideas, but one does not act. One* must *act. It is only that which gives results; it is only that which counts. Ideas? However good they may be, they possess value only in so far as they are translated into facts.*"

Action serves him as a standard by which to judge men.

"*Act, and you will be taken into account . . . good intentions, everyone has them. One must exe-*

cute them; there is the difficulty. I judge according to the results obtained. You give people a label. They are this or that. What do you suppose that matters to me? Your epithets—I don't know what all that means. What I look at is what there is underneath: what they have done, what they are capable of doing. I don't ask them for their opinion, but for results."

When presenting to an officer on his General Staff the rosette of the Légion d'Honneur, he said to him: "*I do not congratulate you on this distinction so much for services rendered as for those which you will be able to render in the future. Carry on!*"

About a pre-War general who had roused considerable attention he subsequently passed this characteristic judgment: "*He was an eccentric; he juggled with Army Corps with extraordinary virtuosity. But I am convinced that he would never have succeeded in the field. He did not know how to achieve results. He was too much of the poet. He was unbalanced. All smoke! That's all!*"

Following his usual practice, he raised the discussion to a higher level: "*You see, that is the rock on which the analytical mind founders . . . one must produce. . . . Produce! Begin at first on a small scale, little by little on a larger scale, and you will get somewhere . . . but produce . . . do not be content with doing nothing. One must build,*

put stone upon stone; one must achieve! One must develop one's powers of construction, synthesis, and method. You fall prostrate in adoration before all these demolishers, but it is the builders you should admire."

That is why one must beware of taking mere agitation for action. "*One must do something. That is understood. But with an aim, a plan, a method. At first reflect, study the problems . . . but do not start off at that stage without knowing what you are going to do . . . know what it is you* will, *and do it. . . . In action one does not study; one simply does what one can, to apply what one knows. From that stage, to provide some basis for that application one must know much, and know it well. . . . Know why and with what material you are acting, and you will know how you must act.*"

For "*It is not enough to have an aim, a plan, and a method; one must pursue their application with a vigorous tenacity. . . . You have given orders, and what then? You must see whether they are carried out—you must supervise people, keep on their track. Believe me, if the higher command had to confine itself to the giving of orders, its function would not be difficult. One must ensure their execution.*

"*Keep on until you have secured a result. You must not abandon anything before you have*

reached the end, before the result. Nothing has been done. *One must carry it through.*"

And modestly he concludes: "*I have no extraordinary ideas, but I do carry out those I have.*" This whimsical remark throws a light upon the very foundation of his thought, and reflects upon his method all the importance which he attaches to it. The result, while constituting the immediate culmination of action, does not depend upon it alone. The advantageous effect secured by its springs from causes more remote; therein lies the whole secret of his power and success.

It is not enough to act, just as it is not enough to will. Those are truisms. With the Marshal, common sense never relinquishes its rights. Just as will-power is only the most conspicuous element in his constitution, so execution is only the final factor, and therefore the most striking of a series of operations, of which the first, being wholly intellectual, takes place unobserved, and which really, in the application of his method, he seems to neglect. Despite appearances, the Marshal does not subordinate intelligence to action. In accordance with his practice of putting everything in its proper place, and never doing more than one thing at a time, he utilises his faculties one after the other. The choice of the aim, like that of the plan, emanates from his knowledge, his intelligence, his reflection, and his judgment. We all know the importance which

he attaches to each when they function in their own abstract sphere; they alone are dominant. But, once the decision is taken, they no longer exist. It is the will which then intervenes, and takes charge with an implacable and absolute sway. Then action alone is of importance. It must be pursued to the end. All that might impede it is pitilessly swept aside. The Marshal plunges straight on, but knowing where he is going: to his goal!

Such is the system which he applied throughout his life. The results achieved demonstrate its value.

RESULTS

"ONE'S VALUE CONSISTS ONLY IN WHAT ONE DOES"

The life of the Marshal, which is indistinguishable from his career, is a fine example of complete success. It bears witness to what can be done when a sound method is applied by a sound character. It is a deliberately constructed edifice of which all the constituent parts are homogeneous and balanced, and which by its total effect gives a harmonious impression of unity and power. Chance played no part in it. No doubt circumstances favoured the Marshal, but only by giving him the opportunity of showing his full stature. They never found him unequal to his task, because for its fulfilment he had a fulcrum—his faith; a lever—his method; and a force—his character.

His faith? He received that from his parents, and his education only increased and confirmed it.

His method? That he created himself by work and reflection.

His character? That he developed with a systematic exercise of will.

"*One's value consists only in what one does.*" Then, "*one must* do *something.*"

What did he do? What he had to do, "giving his best to it." How?

His method, founded on a few simple principles, is that of a man of action. It is not novel, but it is positive, it is sound. To use a metaphor which he borrows from Napoleon, it constitutes an indispensable "grammar," but "a grammar does not teach one how to compose an Iliad, or a tragedy of Corneille." Something else is necessary: genius—but it is rare. Failing that, at least character. The Marshal's character—and in his case character was genius—finds in this textbook the constituents of a poem which he did better than write, for he lived it. Method by itself is not absolutely efficacious. It is judged by the manner in which it is employed.

The Marshal, by his capacity for work, the extent of his knowledge, and the continuity of his efforts, provided the extensive matter to which his method was applied. It was his ardour, his activity, and the force of his inspiration (he calls them his "coups de vent") which distinguished his actions, which gave them their great impetus and raised him *to the very summit.*

"I was in the 3rd at the Lycée de Rodez when my 'horoscope de Polytechnique' was drawn by my mathematical master called Almeras, a man of amazingly simple, precise and forcible logical power. He said: 'You should send him to the Polytechnique; that is the best thing for him. He has a geometrical mind.' *It was he who gave me my objective."*

Sixty years later, his features expressing all the gratitude he feels for that service, the Marshal still likes to recall this fortunate impulse which gave a direction to his youth and determined his vocation. However difficult the entrance examination to the École Polytechnique, success is possible, for each year sees several admissions from the same school. The goal is attainable: what an encouragement! And all the more desirable since once attained it opens the door to the future: what a stimulant!

And his plan? Its place was taken by a system of time-tables, which the professors helped the students to follow. To profit by their advice it was only necessary to work. The more hesitation as to the road to follow, the more time was lost in vain reverie. Work was made easy.

As to the method—"*it was necessary to persevere in one's efforts, which is not difficult if, in studying, one seeks to reduce everything to simplicity, to clarify and to prune, without losing one's head.*" The choice of an aim had the effect of a catalysing agent which fixed all the good elements in suspension. It is essential to lead together all these abundant springs—like water feeding a river—so vast is the power of a career whose onward path is clear and straight. And he himself fosters and endows with a point of application (which will never allow them to be exerted in vain) those forces which the longing for a definite goal brings into being. The essential thing is not so much to be uncommonly endowed with such forces, as to direct them all to one point. That is the function of the will.

"*Gifts? There is no such thing. Intelligence? Certainly one must have it. But beyond everything, will: a steady will which does not dissipate its strength. There you have the whole thing—will-power. As soon as we will, we understand, and we can, even with an average intelligence. He who bends all his will towards one fixed goal, who perseveres and keeps his mind taut, is sure to reach that goal. Seize hold of an idea, establish it like a polar star, walk with your eyes steadfast upon it. One succeeds only by dogged and well directed work.*"

His father, suspended from duty owing to the

abolition of the post of Exchequer paymaster, which he held in the Department of Aveyron, had been compelled to return to his own district of Haute-Garonne and put his children in a local high school. "*It was the first time that I had entered a religious community. What most struck me at Polignan at the very outset was the devotion of the priests who were our masters. They took real trouble over us and made me specialise in mathematics all by myself, to push me on. . . . It was a small seminary, where the pupils were preparing for the priesthood; they worked with enthusiasm! They were older than I, about seventeen years of age. I was fourteen or fifteen. They were much more advanced. They plugged all the time. They were stout fellows. They always had their nose in a book. So to keep pace with them I had to pull a stiff oar. That's what I learnt best there—to pull a stiff oar!*"

To such good purpose that after two years in the fifth and sixth forms, when his father had just been appointed collector of taxes at Saint-Etienne, he won the most brilliant successes under the Jesuits at the Collège Saint-Michel. "*My elder brother and I found companions of our own age there. So then we were much stronger than they. In fact it was said:* 'How is it that these two little Fochs carry off all the prizes?' . . . *We had been at a good school at Polignan.*"

As the final stage, the Fathers sent him to their college at Metz to prepare for his competitive examination.

"*In 1869 when I came to Saint-Clément,*[1] *I remained six months without seeing the sun. I could not get used to it! I came from the Pyrenees . . . Later I got used to it. But it was hard. Still, I had come to work, and there they worked hard. . . .*"

He was to preserve the memory of this all his life, and never failed, on each of his journeys to Metz, after the War, to revisit his old school. He enjoys walking through the class-rooms and quadrangles, remembering all he owes to Father Cosson, to Father Saussier, to all those who moulded his mind and gave him the sound moral foundations on which he could rely with confidence throughout his life even in the most difficult circumstances. "*It was here that I learned to work,*" he declares on these occasions to the young students who surround him, as they listen respectfully to the great soldier whose voice has so much authority, and whose example has such prestige in their eyes. "*So I carried away from your school an admirable memento. Work, you, too. The greatest heights will be accessible to you, but you must work to reach them, work hard. Go, too, to your chapel to look for the light without which nothing avails.*" And then, showing them the way, he goes and kneels

[1] A school in Metz.

between the oaken pews that are the same as long ago. . . .

But at the time of taking his examinations, at the beginning of August 1870, suddenly the war broke out; despite that the written tests were held at Metz on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of August. The Emperor had just arrived to take command of the French Armies. The next day at Forbach they suffered defeat. In the middle of the general panic, he had to leave Saint-Clément, and on the 11th of August depart from Metz after fighting his way to a train, where he found his travelling companion in an old peasant woman who was a fugitive from Strasbourg carrying away her sole treasure, a pot of geranium!

But what he carried away was two glimpses of war: "*In front of the Prefecture I saw Napoléon III. The square was full of carriages, and in a barouche the Emperor was starting off, ill, tired, and depressed . . . the Grand Hôtel was being used as Headquarters. Bazaine's General Staff was installed there in complete chaos. The General was playing billiards.*"

Now a refugee in Paris, he made a futile attempt at the oral examinations, but without waiting any longer, he listened to the call of his country: "*I enlisted for the duration of the war. I was in the 24th company of a battalion. I could do nothing!*"

After the disaster, when he returned to continue

his studies at the school of Saint-Clément, the Germans were in occupation. "*In the court-yard where we used to play one of the Pomeranians who kept guard over us took our ball on the pretence that we had thrown it into a forbidden area. Then I got together all my friends, we dashed to the assault and got our ball back from him . . . !*" When he had to pass his examinations at Nancy in 1871, Manteuffel was military governor of the town. And it was thus that he attained the first goal of his youth, in such circumstances as to mark all his life with their influence.

The squandering and frittering away of energy which spoils so many youthful lives he had been able to resist by the convergence of his efforts towards an object chosen in good time. And during those laborious years, every influence he underwent conspired to develop his faculties. At the age when the mind of children is so malleable, he had received the admirable imprint of purpose, and had acquired the taste and habit of hard work. At the age when a young man is beginning to think for himself, to acquire a collection of ideas, convictions and tendencies, he was ripened by portentous events. The man exists potentially in the youth. The first experience of his life, well directed, guided towards an aim sought athwart and despite the most trying vicissitudes, could not but stimulate him to adopt the same means again for the great

adventure of life. "*When one has found a good system which has stood the test, why change it?*" He will be faithful to it all his life. His character is finally formed. It rests on deep and solid foundations. He will be able to build upon them the whole edifice of his career, and raise it without fear to any height he wills.

So his youth gives us a kind of first sketch of his future maturity. The main features will be the same; simply more deeply marked. They will gain in profundity and in power.

This fortunate parting will endow his life with a unity and a homogeneity which will transform it into an unshakeable rock.

The first day when he was able to put on his new uniform he went for a walk in Paris with his friend Graef, who had been his companion both at the Military School and on first commission. "*We used to walk about tapping the ground with our heels and we used to hold ourselves very straight as if something had changed in the aspect of the universe.*" Ah!—pride of the male!—heroic energy of youth in the ardour and fullness of life, which forgets nothing, and never loses heart!

"*The instruction at the College was excellent. They did not teach us everything, that was impossible, but when one left there, one was able to understand anything. Then one had to throw oneself into the world to assimilate the theory one had*

been taught and to strive to put it into practice." On his leaving the Polytechnique, the young sub-lieutenant was appointed to the regiment of artillery stationed at Tarbes. Here he was back in his country where a few years earlier he had taken so eagerly the first step on his chosen path. He had succeeded in this first enterprise because he knew what he willed and had, by means of power of will, perseverance, and energy, the sole means of ensuring success—work. But after that how many misfortunes broke over the country! The invasion, the surrender, and the degrading peace, the loss of Alsace Lorraine, the occupation by the conqueror of a part of French territory. For a man of character those are not adequate motives for depression, but, on the contrary, for patriotic exaltation. The anguish which crushes the weak stimulates the strong. "Nothing makes us so great as a great grief."

Life is opening before him. He has chosen his career—that of arms. Must he not avenge his country, buffeted by so many insults and still besmirched by an intolerable presence? What henceforth can be his aim but to serve this country—bruised, ruined, anguished and yet so proud of her children, whose courage at least has saved her honour. And what must there be to secure that aim? *La revanche!*

A clear, laudable, superb ambition, but how difficult, arduous and remote! By what steps is he to

reach it? For a young officer, his duty is marked out—to master his profession.

"*I pursued with single purpose my military ambition. I strove to apply the conclusions of an essay which had been given us to work upon at Saint-Clément, at the very moment when the country was being invaded by those Germans whom I meant one day to pursue.* 'Youth must train its gifts.' *There is the whole secret. Our gifts must be bent towards the one essential goal: the act of willing. Obstacles ought not to exist for man if he pursues an object, and above all if he is not afraid of any responsibility whatsoever. Thus equipped one is equal to any emergencies that arise, and thus able to dominate them.*"

But at the moment when he entered upon his career the reactions of the defeat were making themselves still more bitterly felt. The National Assembly of 1871 had taken up a difficult and burdensome inheritance. Shackled by the past but turning towards the future, hesitating between the two, it displayed the same hesitation in undertaking the re-organisation of our military forces as in attempting the political reformation of the country. It lacked in energy and had not the strength to take inevitable decisions. The whole Army in an ardent desire for regeneration set itself to the task with feverish energy. Unfortunately the reinstatement of too many of the officers returning from

captivity perpetuated in the Army the mistakes of former days.

"*The Second Empire was brilliant! Make no mistake about it! It was smart! Never more so! Have you read 'Le Désastre' by the brothers Margueritte? That gave you the Army of the Empire to the life. Fine fellows, fine talkers, elegance, effervescence, and so worth nothing. The leaders knew how to make war as well as elephants know how to climb a ladder. No one was in command. The leaders were never there! The Colonel? Good, at most, for the command of a company! And even more! For walking in front, and crying 'Forward' with a cigar in his mouth. They followed him. Brave? Certainly they were brave. Very! But bravery is quite beside the point. They were soldiers, fine soldiers, but not leaders. What is required of leaders is that they should command. . . . They were not stupid, they were even intelligent. . . . Very genteel, plenty of go, plenty of good humour. But it is not enough to strut about and march past in brilliant style.*"

As early as his first manœuvres with his regiment, he realised that "*All that ought not to be as it is.*" They did not know how to make a body of men march, they did not know any of the elementary precautions to take to ensure safety, they were entirely ignorant of their profession, the leaders did not know how to command, and, further, they did

not attempt to do it. It was always the Army of the Second Empire.

"*Why! In 1870, the 5th Army Corps under De Failly received on the 4th August the order to support, with the two Divisions which were at Sarreguemines, that which was at Bitche. They had just heard of the defeat at Wissembourg and they were fearing an attack from Alsace. Instead of proceeding to Bitche according to orders, the G.O.C. of the 5th Army Corps let himself be stopped by the threat of a handful of patrols and refused to abandon Sarreguemines. The 1st Division set off alone to get as far as possible. The first day they did 7 kilometres. The next day, without either advanced guard or flankers, it took the whole day to manage 22 kilometres, and they arrived worn out. The same day a brigade of the 2nd Division had nevertheless left Sarreguemines but got no further than Rohrbach, because the night before a regiment of cavalry had crossed the frontier. As a result, on the evening of the 5th, the Army Corps which ought to and could have joined it at Bitche, was spread out over the 35 kilometres separating that town from Sarreguemines. There you have the result of false theories, individual views, ignorance of the right precautions.*

"*The same evening MacMahon telegraphed to General De Failly:* 'Come to Reischoffen as quickly

as possible with all your Army Corps.' *That was the same thing. At every cross-roads the column halted. They searched the country on front and flank with cavalry and sometimes with infantry. During this time the whole Division was getting into a tangle. Officers and men, excited by the cannonade, were growing impatient with these delays. They began to meet wounded men and fugitives. When they arrived it was the full tide of retreat they met in the town. The Division under Guyot de Lespaz had taken more than nine hours—from 7.30 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon—to cover the 22 kilometres between Bitche and Niederborn. It brought troops physically and morally exhausted. Above all, it brought useless troops. The 5th Army Corps was entirely absent at the meeting place arranged. The battle was lost by its fault. The higher command of this 5th Army Corps was not a special case in our Army; it was simply typical of its time and spirit. . . .*

"The higher command, that was the principal thing; our misfortune is that we are short of leaders. Yes! Even in the Army! They know their profession, but nothing else. It is the fault of a general mental indolence. They do not work, they do not keep themselves up to the mark. They dare not take responsibility. They ought to prepare themselves to occupy important positions. They do nothing. They are in a groove. They stick in the rut.

They realise it themselves. But it would require an effort to get out of it, and their mental indolence prevents them. One must work. The lack of leaders, that is the trouble."

Then he must become a leader. So henceforth the goal he must reach forces itself upon him as clearly as the plan he must follow—to prepare himself for command.

There are no irremediable defeats for those who know how to discover their causes and to account for them.

All the same, how is a young officer, for all his zeal and willingness, going to find the true road through so many false theories? At that time there was no rational and practical instruction. They fully admitted that moral power might play a part in war, but they systematically discarded it, believing it not susceptible to investigation. "*Defeat was thought to be a condition constituted solely by material losses, whereas it is, on the contrary, a purely moral result caused by the discouragement and fear infused into the loser by the combined and simultaneous employment of moral and material forces on the part of the victor.*" It was then concluded that for victory one must have numbers, the best armies, and skilfully chosen positions. "*As for the most important data of the problem, whether it is a question of the higher command or of the fulfilment, that which inspires*

and keeps alive the subject, the man, with his moral, intellectual and physical gifts . . . he was left on one side! It was the triumph of the school of thought—'War is learnt only by war.' Clearly one cannot deny the value of the experience furnished by such an apprenticeship, nor the special stamp given to the mind and character by the habit of taking decisions in the presence of a real enemy who delivers blows against you, but that school is not a school in the real sense of the word; it is not a school we can open or carry on by our mere theoretical instruction." And yet the proofs lay to hand: the Austrians in 1866, although they had made war a few years earlier in 1859, were beaten by the Prussians who themselves had had no war since 1815. "*The former made war without understanding it (like the French in 1870 who had had plenty of war-like experience); the latter understood it without having practical experience, but they devoted study to it.*"

The method of learning then forces itself upon our attention: "*To maintain the mental vitality of an army in time of peace, to compel its thoughts constantly in the direction of war, there is no book more fertile in suggestions than the book of History.*"

He was well aware of that, for throughout his youth he had read M. Thiers's *Le Consulat et l'Em-*

pire. "At eleven I knew the battles of Marengo and Trafalgar off by heart."

It is from the victors that one learns the lessons of victory: "*Napoleon seemed to me the finest historical type one can possibly study, because he had the sense of discipline, a passion for work, a horror of words and of that idle phrase-making which spells death to action.*"

But how must history be interpreted?—"*In the spirit of Alexandre Dumas, as a series of extraordinary and prodigious exploits, unexplained and inexplicable; or as an inevitable chain of events, like the incomprehensible genius of the Emperor, or, rather, his guiding star?*" No, for that would lead to "*fetichism or fatalism, to the deprecation of work, to the negation of culture, to mental indolence.*"

For fifteen years he devoted himself to an apprenticeship to his profession, reading widely to increase his knowledge, thinking deeply to assimilate it, and yet living a very active life, whether taking a riding course at Saumur, or whether, as a captain at Rennes, in constant contact with the rank and file, he was contending with the thousand and one difficulties arising from day to day, which he tries earnestly to resolve, "*as if they were important,*" so as to develop the power of instantaneous reasoning and action. For on the field of battle one can apply only what one knows. "*From that*

stage, to make some provision for such application, one must know much, and know it well."

In 1885 he entered the Staff College. Passing out, he was appointed to the Army Corps at Montpellier. But already he had been noticed, and one of his former commanders, Major Delanne, invited him to join him in the third section of the Army General Staff. "*At that time they were still rather old-fashioned!*" And now he appeared, with his individual ideas. He had already character and authority.

"*I was regarded as a revolutionary there; I wrote brief orders, I did not fill up all the pigeonholes; they criticised me. I replied: 'Have I put in every point?' 'Yes!' 'Well then, what more do you want?' The next year, in 1891, there were autumn manœuvres; oh! those autumn manœuvres! Naturally, they were to end with a review. I was appointed to organise it. . . . I astonished them. No one had ever succeeded before in massing more than 100,000 men on a rectangle 120 metres broad and 100 metres long—a mere pocket handkerchief! I made them march past by Army Corps. At 8 o'clock there wasn't even a cat on the parade ground. At ten minutes past there were 100,000 men. They came up from all sides, in columns, not in extended line. And a quarter of an hour after the review, the parade ground was absolutely empty. Every de-*

tachment had its own route to its entraining station. . . . Like a flight of sparrows!"

For the first time since 1870 the French Army had thus demonstrated the progress made during the last twenty years of hard work, showing itself to be well trained, keen, provided with perfect arms and equipment, led by excellent officers, and displaying the most admirable discipline; in a word, a formidable instrument of war.

In 1895 he was appointed lecturer in the course of military history, strategy and tactics held at the Staff College. His own work, his historical studies, his growing reputation, all marked him out for the post. He saw in it only a reason for working still harder, since, in order to teach, you must be "well up in your subject," and nothing more irresistibly compels you to get to the very bottom of that subject than the necessity of expounding and teaching it to others.

When in the following year, on the departure of Colonel Bonnal, the chief lecturer in the course, it was suggested that he should take his place, he objected at first that he was not yet sufficiently sure of his principles. So diffident does real distinction make one. But no attention was paid to his deprecation.

Then it was that he spread his wings. He rose in full flight, higher and higher. It was a revelation.

Those principles that he was still seeking, he was

now to elaborate by teaching them in his own lectures, in which he was to study them with a freedom from preconceptions, an ability in analysis, a gift for synthesis, and so burning a conviction, that it could almost be seen coming to birth in his thoughts as they define and unfold themselves in luminous phrases and invincible arguments. For it was no spontaneous creation; it was an evolution. As a foreword to his *Principles of War*, he inscribed these words of Napoleon: "It is not a guiding spirit that reveals to me secretly in a flash what I must say or do, but thought and reflection." His former labours were beginning to bear fruit.

The problem that he tried to solve was that of the training of the leader. Now that solution was the very one which he had for years been seeking for himself. The man and the professor from now onwards are to merge completely into each other: the same object, the same plan. So his exposition of his subject is the expression of his most intimate and most deeply pondered meditation. What accents of truth, what force of conviction! He is not the professor expounding his theories, but the man giving himself without stint, sharing his own life, proclaiming his own convictions, announcing his own belief, confessing his own faith. This question, which he studies with so much passionate ardour, he is about to examine as a whole, to treat it in its every aspect, and to raise it to such a level that the

answer may be understood, not only by military leaders, but also by all who desire to direct, command, guide, or lead men in fields other than that of war. What he aimed at in his lectures on the *Principles of War*—"*beacons kindled on a stormy shore to guide the bewildered mariner*"—was not a complete exposition, methodical, if not academical, on the art of warfare, but "*guiding principles for the mind to enable it always to conceive a rational application.*" His exposition will be so profoundly human, of so wide a scope, of such stimulating cogency, that their results will have a greater influence than ever he contemplated.

From the study of history have been evolved teachings which assume the form of a theory of war and of a doctrine. "*By these words we must understand the conception, and the putting into practice, not of a science of war or of a fixed dogma, a collection of intangible truths to depart from which would be mere heresy; but a certain number of principles, indisputable once they have been laid down, the application of which depends on circumstances, but is always directed towards an objective issue.*"

It cannot be denied that the theory of war involves the acceptance of a certain number of theories, but "*a knowledge of principles without the faculty of applying them is useless.*" For this reason, one should not be content with ideas or words,

but should put them into action. "*Teaching would be a waste of time if it did not lead to the application of principles. Hence, after 'precept' one should aim at 'practice'; at the constant application of principles already acquired, which is the only method by which judgment and character can be developed.*" With this in view, it is necessary to teach how best to utilise the resources of the intellect by means of exercises in which "the subjects taught are applied to individual cases," to quote the words of Marshal von Moltke.

This constitutes a form of practical instruction which paves the way for the acquisition of experience, teaches the art of command, and assists in the formation of "*the habit of acting correctly by intuition.*" For "*war is above all a simple art and one solely of execution,*" says Napoleon, and therefore in it "*deeds take priority over ideas, actions over words, practice over precept.*"

Nevertheless, to be able suitably to apply fixed principles in a manner varying according to circumstances, it is necessary to deal with the subject in a manner which is wholly objective. "*In war, all the factors are inextricably linked together by paramount necessity; one cannot do what one wills. Every operation has a* raison d'être*—in other words, an object; this object, once fixed, determines the importance of the methods to be applied—the use which is to be made of forces. This object in every*

case constitutes the reply to the famous questions which Verdy du Vernois asked himself when he arrived on the battlefield of Nachod. Confronted by the difficulties which were present, he racked his brains in the hope of remembering some example or precept which might provide him with an inspiration as to the course which he should adopt. 'To hell,' he said, 'with history and principles! After all what is the real question?' And immediately he made up his mind what to do. That is the objective manner of handling a problem."

All the same, the knowledge of principles and the method of their application would unduly restrict a field of study which in other respects should be a wide one; for, as Clausewitz says, "the practice of war, in all its dimensions, is capable of extension in every direction to an almost unlimited degree."

"*Strategy,*" says Foch, "*if susceptible of easy analysis, is not equally simple from the point of view of synthesis; though it may be easily understood after it has been practised, it is not a simple thing to put into practice. What is required is the ability, in special circumstances, to appreciate the situation as it exists, shrouded in the mist of the unknown; the ability to form a sound judgment of the seen, to divine the unseen, to make a quick decision and thereupon to act vigorously without hesitation. Further, two factors must be borne in mind; one known—one's own will, and the other*

unknown—that of the enemy; and to these must be added certain factors of a different nature, which it is impossible to estimate—temperature, sickness, railway accidents, misunderstandings, mistakes, all those circumstances, in fact, of which man is neither the originator nor the master: it matters little whether we call them chance or fatality, or whether we attribute them to Providence. It is obvious that theoretical knowledge is useless to cope with these; what is needed is the free, artistic, and practical development of the faculties, qualities of the mind and character founded on military knowledge already acquired, and guided by experience, whether that derived from military history or that which is furnished by everyday life. As Moltke says, strategy is more than a science; it is knowledge applied in actual life, the development of the primitive governing influence of thought according to the ever-changing nature of events; it is the art of acting under the pressure of the most difficult circumstances. Summed up in a few words, strategy is merely a matter of character and common sense."

But with the constant increase in the importance of the effective forces and the technical equipment of modern warfare, can the commander-in-chief concentrate all these qualities in his own personality? Will not even a military genius need helpers endowed to the full with initiative and training,

such as are demanded by Von der Goltz? Inasmuch as the command of an army is too complicated for a single man, what is needed is a whole corps of officers, whose capabilities are based on method, industry, and knowledge, who are animated by the same spirit, who are subject to the same mental discipline.

In these circumstances, in what mental attitude should this instruction be approached? "*The first point is to grasp the fundamentals—next an open mind, free from prejudice and undeveloped ideas, free from opinions blindly accepted because one has always heard them advanced, or seen them executed, without question.*

"*There is only one criterion—that of reason. Next, these truths must be applied to special cases, first of all on maps, afterwards on the training ground, and eventually on the battlefield. We should not seek analogies, or appeal to memory, which will vanish at the first cannon shot; no more ready-made schemes or diagrams, however much intrinsic value they may have in themselves. We wish to arrive on the field with a trained judgment —to do that we must have exercised it, we should commence to exercise it from now onwards. Let us seek the fundamental reason of things. . . . In conclusion, the question resolves itself into one of applying truths unconsciously and automatically. To do this, they must be familiar to us, we must*

be steeped in them until they are part of our very being. . . . Each of us ought to cultivate his convictions, his knowledge and his muscles. We shall only attain this result by a continuous effort of penetration, of absorption, of assimilation, by painstaking labour. Work is a constant appeal to reflection. . . . You will later on be required to become the brain of an army."

But what shall be the purpose of all these teachings if it is not the very purpose of war—victory? There is only one way of achieving this—battle.

All these theories and doctrines would be futile and self-contradictory if they did not result in the act of strength which is the supreme solution.

"*A battle won is a battle in which one will not own oneself defeated. For:*

War = the province of moral force.
Victory = superiority in morale on the part of the victor; inferiority in morale on the part of the vanquished.
Battle = the struggle of two wills.

If our army is to be victorious, it must possess a morale superior to that of the enemy, or must be given one by those who command it. The will to conquer is the first condition of victory, and consequently the first duty of every soldier; but it is also a supreme resolution which the higher com-

mand should, if necessary, be able to transmit to the soul of the troops.

"For the army which wishes to win, it is thus necessary to have one chief distinction—effective leadership; and for him who wishes to direct the battle, one gift is essential—the power to lead.

"Homage, therefore, to this sovereign power of command, as on the battlefield the drums and trumpets will pay homage to its manifestation, so necessary for the organisation of a combined movement, of a final advance which is alone able to achieve success.

"As we begin our survey, let us make a note of this primary distinction, the action of the leader; no victory can be achieved without a vigorous commander, eager for responsibilities and bold enterprises, possessing and inspiring all with the resolution and the energy to endure to the end without having to fall back on personal action—born of will, judgment, and freedom of mind in the midst of danger: gifts natural to the genius, the born general; but, for the average man, advantages acquired only by hard work and reflection.

"This power of individual action is one whose manifestation demands the temperament of the leader (a gift of nature), the definite aptitude for command, the driving force of enthusiasm which no staff college can supply.

"Individual action—whose effects are manifold;

for, by the use of these gifts, natural or acquired, it finds in the most unrestricted use of its qualities the very means of evoking power. But at the same time it transforms the instruments of its own expression, producing officers and men of high morale, that is to say, capacities, loyalties, which, without the spark or impulse given from above, would no doubt remain of a mediocre quality."

Can one imagine the effect of these fiery words, lauding the part of the leader, on the career of these young officers who had entered the Army inspired by the sacred flame of patriotism, urged on by the thought of revenge, eager to learn, who had entered the Staff College in order to acquire the art of command?

In conclusion, he added:

"A lesson of a higher character may be derived from this survey. At the present time, when it is thought possible to dispense with ideals, to reject what are termed abstract notions, to depend on realism, rationalism, positivism, to reduce everything to questions of knowledge or expediency, more or less ingenious, applied in a casual manner, only one resource—but a sound and a fruitful one —can be found by which to avoid mistakes and disaster; one must hold fast to two abstract moral ideas—duty and discipline, which, to be truly effective, must be supplemented by knowledge and ability to reason."

It will be understood that, with intellectual preoccupations such as these, he was able for twenty years, overshadowed as they were by defeat, to overcome discouragement and live through a period in which scepticism and dilettantism were cultivated like fashionable maladies, without himself being infected by them.

Similarly, he held himself aloof from politics, in compliance with the military tradition long followed by all, but from which, unfortunately, certain officers were at the time beginning to deviate.

"*I was told*, 'Mark my words, you will never get anywhere.' '*You will not prevent me from being promoted, and from getting my* rosette (*of the Legion of Honour*) *when I take my pension.*' 'Yes, but you will never be a commander (of the Legion).' '*What does that matter? And I have had my* cravate, *my* plaque, *and my* grand cordon! *What of these others? They certainly made a good start, but that was as far as they got! You know, one should not have the idea that, in order to succeed, intrigue is essential. And what then? . . . No, one must work, and follow the paths of honesty. The reward will come, it always comes. That method pays best in the long run.*'"

Whenever an unfortunate "affaire" created a great stir, he avoided contamination by refraining from political discussions. His moral strength thus

remained unimpaired, and he kept his opinions to himself. So at times, when party feelings were rife, he became the object of ill will.

Dismissed from the Staff College in 1901 because he was accused of being a reactionary, unjustly sent in disgrace to Laon, kept under suspicion, deprived of advancement for three years, although on the list for promotion to the rank of colonel, he bore up under his trials, and urged his colleagues who were fellow victims with him not to resign their commissions, for this would be desertion. "*You have no guts! When war comes, you will have to put up with worse things than that! If you can't stand it now, what will you do then?*"

At last, when appointed colonel of the 35th Regiment of Artillery at Vannes, in 1903, he made use of his theories of self-subordination in the instruction of his regiment. What was his job? To teach his men to fire their guns. Range orders and all administrative regulations had to bow before this necessity.

After his promotion to the rank of brigadier-general, the question of his appointment as Commandant of the Staff College was discussed. But political passions had not subsided, and Clemenceau, then Prime Minister, wished first of all to see him. "*On our first meeting, we shook hands. Is the story which is told of our first meeting true? That depends. It is a fact that I told him that my brother*

was a Jesuit. That he replied to me, 'I don't care a damn for that! Turn out good men!' *is not quite the truth, but it is a good paraphrase. The business took much longer than that. I took a firm attitude, and told him plainly, 'My brother is a Jesuit, I admit, but he is in Holland, and I am forty. I am beginning to act on my own, without needing to ask his advice.' As soon as I said that he let fly at me, and we had such a long and pleasant talk that we kept the Cabinet meeting arranged for 9 o'clock—I had arrived at 8.45—waiting. At 9.25 I took my departure. He said,* 'I will give you a command,' *and asked me to send him copies of my books. That was July 15th, 1908. After that I attended the manœuvres, and had no time to think of anything. . . . In September, I was at the manœuvres with Picard, who was then War Minister. One day he said to me,* 'So you are going to the Staff College?' *'Oh?' said I.* 'The President says so,' *he replied. Eight days later, nothing had yet happened. M. Clemenceau was then temporarily acting as War Minister, and sent for me.*

" 'There is an adverse report on you.'

" *'I should like to see it.'*

" 'The Prefect of the Aisne reports about you: "A good officer, but a doubtful Republican." What have you to say?'

" *'Nothing.'*

" 'Is that so?'

" '*But is that all?*'

" 'Yes.'

" '*Then you are not in possession of the reports which the Prefects of the Loriet and Morbihan made on me?*'

" 'That is so.'

" '*Then your dossier is incomplete and meaningless. It is General Toutée* [1] *who has trumped up a case against me!*'

" 'Yes, you are right. But what are you going to teach at the Staff College?'

" '*Nothing, as I shall be in charge!*'

" 'Yes, but in what way are you going to take charge?'

" '*I shall do just as I did when I was a professor there.*'

" 'But they didn't like you, because you favoured students who came from the Jesuit schools?'

" '*That is surprising. I did not know who they were. . . . Mention some of them.*'

" 'De Grandmaison, de Lafontaine.'

" '*They are A.D.C.'s to General Tremeau* [2] *or on the General Staff. . . . Not such a bad choice! What about the others?*'

" 'X . . ., Y . . ., Z . . .'

" '*Where are they?*'

" 'I don't know.'

[1] Under Secretary at the War Ministry.
[2] At that time a distinguished general.

"'*You see. . . . And even now you have only mentioned five or six, and I have had over 500 students through my hands!*'

"*After that he appointed me.*"

Could it be otherwise? A character which is so full of vigour, independence, and loyalty cannot fail to inspire confidence. Confronted by such a personality, politics are powerless. Clemenceau was far too intelligent not to realise that.

As Commandant at the Staff College, General Foch, as he had promised, put into operation the principles which he had taught as a professor, and whose importance he had again realised. During the last few years, the Russo-Japanese War, with its long and costly battles, had taken place. From these operations (although in his opinion the lessons to be learned from them were neither complete nor of immediate interest; for, owing to many reasons —the widespread theatre of operations, the lack of communications, and the limited objectives—this war differed from a possible European war, the only war which he contemplated, the Great War) he concluded that, even if "*methods of warfare are subject to change, the guiding principles hold good.*" This inference greatly encouraged him.

Appointed Divisional General in 1911, he was placed in command of an Army Corps in 1912. For several years he helped to secure the promotion of a number of officers holding acting rank, who

afterwards disseminated his ideas throughout the whole of the French Army, and was then in a position to complete his own training as a leader by holding the command of large units.

Circumstances were then particularly favourable. The general situation in Europe was daily becoming more alarming. The Germans, who had since 1905 been seeking a quarrel with us, were beginning to disclose their warlike aims. The reign of peace had already been disturbed in the Balkans, where war had arisen and where there seemed little probability of the flames being extinguished. We ourselves, confronted by these perils, commenced to take various precautions, for in modern warfare "*a state of preparedness is more necessary, and needs to be carried a stage further, than in bygone days.*"

This war, which may take place to-morrow, and for which it is necessary to make active and energetic preparations, will undoubtedly assume a nationalist character which will considerably aggravate its violence. "*It is against Germany that we shall have to fight some day: it is against her that we must be prepared to leap with one accord, with our heads well forward.*" More than ever before, this war will be a dreadful and passionate drama. More than forty years ago, Bismarck foretold it; "The war of 1870 will be child's play compared with the war of to-morrow." The struggle will

require the whole of the national resources. *"If we wish to have men capable of preparing for this war, and of leading when the hour comes, we must continue to arouse the enthusiasm of the intelligent few."*

The time draws near; the mere idea is already terrifying. Those who know the nature of the dangers to be avoided, the difficulties to be overcome, the sufferings to be borne, those who will be called upon to assume the heaviest responsibilities while directing it, what tremendous courage they will need! Where will they find this except in their character?

On August 23rd, 1913, General Foch was appointed to the command of the 20th Army Corps, which mounts guard nearest to the frontier. Nancy! He gives orders for all the bands in his Corps to play there in order to drown his memories of the flutes of Manteuffel!

He is ready. His training, long, patient, continuous, laborious, is finally completed. He is prepared for his ordeal, which he calmly awaits. The foundations of the system which he has built up, and to which he has devoted his career, are solidly laid. He is certain of them. The bold bridge, built girder by girder, to be thrown, one day, from the banks of the past to those of the future, will it stand the strain, once it spans the gap? Yes, if the calculations are accurate. If they are not, the engineer will

perish with it. What does it matter! The engineer is of no importance—what counts is the accuracy of the calculations, the strength of the logical basis. Should they fail, the most powerful force, that which sustains the whole moral and intellectual structure, would crumble into ruin. It would be as if truth were to vanish from the world, as if light were to become extinct. That could never be.

Foch has Faith.

The War?

"*I had been expecting it for the last forty years, but I was beginning to think that I should end my days without having seen it.*"

It was not for him to bring it to pass: he did nothing to make it happen. Suddenly it looms on the horizon; there is hardly a moment for consideration. It then becomes a reality which has to be faced. He does not rejoice; matters are too serious. War was inevitable. "*The Germans were bent on it: they would have had it by hook or by crook. The proof? The Serbian ultimatum; all their conditions were accepted, but despite this they attacked the Serbians.*" This neither surprised nor disconcerted him. He was alike *sans peur* and *sans reproche.* Will it be a war of revenge? Most assuredly. "*Our men are fighters whose racial characteristics render them soldiers indisputably superior to those on the other side of the Vosges; they possess qualities of activity, intelligence, impetus, responsiveness, devotion, patriotism. The Germans? They are certainly good soldiers also. They defeated us before, I admit, but in what condition were we then? . . . One of my former chiefs, to whom I*

owe much, General Millet, taught me that we ought not to fear them. They are like the others, no stronger. They know their trade, they are professional soldiers, but we can do as well as they. I am not afraid of them."

It is not his object, but his plan, which is modified by circumstances. It is no longer a question of preparing for but of waging war. He must throw himself into the battle, *la bataille pour vaincre,* with all his ardour, all his energy. It is the battle for which he longs.

It is no longer a time for making leaders, but for being one. From now onwards, what is important is "*deeds and not ideas, action and not words, practice and not precept.*" He who has the greatest force of character must display it. Every resource must be brought into play, every force concentrated, every particle of will-power used so that, come what may, the final objective may be attained —victory. At last the opportunity presents itself: it is within reach and it is essential that it should be seized. In any case the will to do this suffices.

"*No sentiments, no preconceived ideas. First of all, let us look at the facts.*" Russia is stirring, but is slow to move. If the Germans had attacked us first, she would have been tardy in her preparations. By beginning with Russia, they caused her to hasten. This was an error on the part of Germany—so much the better. They pushed into Bel-

gium and extended their front towards the north. So far as we were concerned, we were forced to turn our attention to something other than the battle of Nancy, an obsession on the part of all our military chiefs. "*General Millet was always telling me: 'What is wrong with the Higher Council is that all the generals have held the Nancy Command. They know every inch of ground there. They have studied every position—the Grand Couronné, the Haricot de X . . ., Z . . . Ridge. The battle of Nancy! That is the only one they have prepared for.*"

Accordingly, leaving Nancy, which the enemy did not attack, General Foch, acting upon orders from General Castelneau (commanding the 2nd Army), entered Lorraine at the head of his 20th Corps.

On August 20th, in front of Morhange, one of his Divisions, the 39th, assaults the heights held by the troops of the Prince of Bavaria. They are held up, but no matter. The next Division, the 11th, is on the spot at full strength, ready to save the situation. But suddenly the order to retire comes through.

What a rebuff. When the race starts, it is the thoroughbred who plunges when he feels the reins. He bucks and kicks, but give him his head, and off he goes at full speed. "*If ever I were tempted to disobey, it is to-day,*" he frankly confesses to his

Chief of Staff, Colonel Duchesne. The latter replies: "You do not know what is happening to the neighbouring Army Corps." And, indeed, on the left the 9th Corps had been held up by enemy forces thrown forward from Metz while on the right the 15th Corps had been driven back and left the flank of the 20th Corps in the air. "*He was right. I therefore began to retreat, withdrawing first the 39th and then the 11th to the heights of Château-Salins. But the roads were blocked by troops in disorder, by supply columns, and by magnificent motor-cars from Nice. On the 21st we had to continue the withdrawal, and cross the Seille, in order to hold the heights of the Meurthe. . . . I went to Nancy. They wanted to evacuate it. I said, 'The enemy is two days from Nancy, and the 29th Corps is there. They won't walk over the 20th without protest!' Besides, the Germans were making for Lunéville by way of the Gap of Charmes. Between the 23rd and the 25th, I attacked strongly on the Einville-Lunéville road. We had to stop their advance, and I gave them a good hammering. They had their artillery at Crion and Sionviller, but it was firing too high. . . . Every evening at 5 o'clock, all their batteries gave us a firework display. For three days we were at it hammer and tongs. They didn't break through. . . . They did not get to Nancy.*"

Such a temperament offers infinite resources, if

only it can be brought into play. Difficulties, instead of discouraging it, arouse its efforts. The enemy has to pay the penalty for holding him in check.

General Joffre, faced by failure and disorder, remains calm. He, however, a man of insight, judges and approves the impetuous action of his subordinate. In readiness for the great battle which he contemplates, and which will decide the fate of France, he reorganises the higher command. To whom shall he entrust the new army, whose task it will be, in the centre of the line, to face the most delicate and most perilous situation? To the man whose feverish activity and dauntless will both attract and re-assure him.

In front of this new army, composed as it is of a General Staff selected at random and of worn-out troops, the enemy is specially threatening. Its attacks succeed, and become of increased violence. Foch deduces from this: "*Since they persist in attacking in such strength, it is evident that things are going badly with them in other sectors.*" Daring though it may be, his assumption is justified. When, after two days of incessant fighting, after a desperate resistance, his army is pushed to the verge of the precipice, he clings desperately to the sacred ground which he is charged to hold, remembering his precept: "*Victory is to those who earn it by having the greatest amount of will power.*" His

success justifies this theory which he has put into practice to the utmost limit.

There are trees on the sea shore which thrive on the force of the storm. Each gust of wind bends them more and more, but their leaves cling to the twigs, their branches hold tightly to the trunk, and their roots burrow into the sandy soil and grip the rock beneath. At the battle of the Marne, danger made his mind more lucid, his intelligence more acute, his soul more steadfast, and his heart, ardently as it desired to survive, beat more steadily, while it taught him to persist, with no less resilience than tenacity, in holding firm.

His cool courage, his deliberate audacity, his skilful tactics, gave General Foch what he appreciated more highly than fame, for which he cared little in so grave a period of crises—a new and heavier command, one more delicate, with greater responsibilities, but also capable of yielding greater results. On October 4th, 1914, he was appointed deputy to the Commander-in-Chief, and was entrusted with the task of co-ordinating the operations of the French Army groups in the north. Moreover, as chance would have it, he had side by side with him the English and Belgian Armies.

The Commander-in-Chief of the former had been instructed by his Minister, Lord Kitchener, that he was not to place himself under the orders of a French general. Both during the retreat from

Charleroi and just before the battle of the Marne, this duality of command had almost led to tragic results. It was only the loyal comradeship of Field Marshal French which saved the situation. As for the Belgian Army, under the terms of the Constitution it could be commanded only by the King of the Belgians.

The imminence of danger, the gravity of events, the violence of the German attacks, were about to result in a solution which, thanks to the tact, the activity and the energy of the man who adopted it, proved to be an excellent one.

During the whole of this battle, General Foch, although he did not hold the command, was the real director of operations. "*I had no right to command; nothing was put on paper. But I did not need it. That is all right for corporals. It is only necessary to be able to think of such and such a matter, and then one goes ahead with it. I have never exercised such effective command as in 1914, when I was deputy to General Joffre. I was in command of the Belgians, and of General French, but I gave them no orders . . . nevertheless I gave them some hard tasks.*"

On October 21st, the Germans threw themselves madly on Dixmude, which had been battered with bombs and shells. Under the assaults of their attacking waves, which were ceaselessly renewed, the Belgian lines were becoming exhausted, and,

lacking reserves and ammunition, they were on the point of succumbing. It was necessary to prevent the forcing of the Yser. They telephone to General Foch, who hastens to the spot and decides the line of resistance. "*I said: 'Hold the railway line.' I did not know the ground, but it was either an embankment or a cutting. In any case, it was a line which would be well marked on the map, and it might provide some cover. Everybody can see and recognise it. They must stop and hold on there, that is simple! . . . It was an embankment, and we dug in on one side. Then the floods came, and stopped on the other side. After that we had some duck-shooting! Yes, the Boches were just like ducks. . . . At the worst moment, when we no longer knew what to do, some more divisions were sent up. They thought they had done all that was needed. And then? What? Not enough? What is wanted is the will to do something. One must say 'Halt! We hold on here.' One must decide on a line to hold. Otherwise . . . they send more divisions. And after that? They don't know what to do. Believe me, what is wanted above all is will power. What is most lacking is command. Nevertheless, it is not difficult. But they give orders: 'Send more troops.' They regard that as sufficient. They issue orders and regulations. And again the orchestra has no conductor. One man plays* la Muette de Portici *and the other* Tannhäuser. *No matter how well*

they play, the noise is dreadful! That is not the way to get things done. One must know what one wills, one must will it, and then . . . And the divisions can come. The position will be held."

A few days later, it was the English troops in their turn who were in a tight corner. On October 30th the British 1st Corps was attacked so strongly that it was on the point of falling back. "*Lord French, at Ypres, said to me:* 'We are all in for it!' '*We shall see. In the meantime, hammer away, keep on hammering, and you will get there. It is surprising the results you attain in this way.*' "

Nevertheless, on the following day, in spite of the reinforcements which had been brought up, further resistance seemed impossible. French was desperate. "All that remains for me to do is to get killed!" "*You must not talk of dying, but of winning!*" Once more spurred on by this moral support, by this "gift" of the true leader, General French pulls himself together and the English troops hold fast.

Once more the Germans failed to break through.

Events justified his maxim: "*The chief thing is the higher command.*"

A motor accident which occurred to General Joffre on January 17th, 1915, while accompanying him from Roobrugge to Dunkirk, caused him great mental anguish. "*General Joffre was seriously injured. I was greatly disturbed and asked myself:*

'What would happen in the case of a serious accident?' As his deputy, I accordingly wrote to the War Ministry. . . . A long time afterwards I received a reply telling me that General Galliéni held a letter of appointment, dated as far back as August 1914. That was not the best way out of the difficulty. Galliéni would have been quite new to the situation, and would have had to grope his way.

The higher command is, after all, a very delicate instrument, and there is the danger that it may be mishandled even by experts if they come into possession of it by chance and wish to use it in a new manner. Certain in action, but difficult to handle; powerful, but extremely sensitive; too heavy for bunglers, it is in the hands of experts a fine, resilient and precise instrument. When not used, it becomes rusty. Utilised for experimental purposes, it soon wears out. The slightest error in its application blunts its point. Requiring knowledge as well as tact, and necessitating the utmost attention, it improves with use when in the hands of a single workman who has a skilled knowledge of his trade. A fragile object, if several people try to grasp it, it will break in the struggle. Left to a team, it immediately deteriorates, since each user wishes to employ it according to his own ideas. Thus mishandled, it gets out of gear, misses fire—and blood is shed uselessly.

Firmly held and brilliantly used during the tragic

period, once the danger point had been passed, the higher command—a terrible object-lesson in the dangers of coalitions—became the object of discussions and jealousies which caused it to fall a victim to conference procedure.

The entry of the Italians into the War, the landing of Kitchener's New Armies, the diversion of the Russian offensive, resulted in a meeting of the Allies at Chantilly on July 7th, 1915. This first conference led to the attacks on Champagne and Artois, which were only partially successful.

Early in 1916, during a further conference on February 14th, it was decided that a large joint operation should take place on the Somme at the beginning of July. But, before the month of February was over, the Germans opened their formidable attack on Verdun. While the struggle on the Meuse was assuming enormous proportions, in the north, General Foch, who had been placed in command of three French armies in the projected Somme offensive, continued his preparations, while every day seeing his effectives despatched to the east.

Despite all these obstacles, this offensive, energetically conducted by the Franco-British forces, opened on the appointed date with excellent initial results. If the anticipated break-through was not achieved, it was at least successful in freeing the pressure on Verdun. "*The battle of the Somme did*

not produce all the results which we had hoped for. It was therefore necessary to find a scapegoat. It was decided to side-track me, and I was pronounced unfit for duty on medical grounds. The officer who notified me of this decision in December 1916 knew nothing of this. He had simply received his orders. But I said to him: 'I am not done for. You do not know me, you have never seen me. How can you state that I am unfit for duty? You can report that I am suffering from fatigue—that may well be the case; we are all fatigued, especially with the life we are leading. That is a matter of opinion. But don't imagine that I am seriously ill. If the Government wishes to remove me from command, I have no objection, but it should not make the pretence that it is on grounds of ill-health.' Then they asked me if I desired a post behind the lines, because the forward troops were under the command of Nivelle, who was only a colonel when I myself was in command of an Army Corps. I replied: 'It is immaterial to me. Leave me with the fighting troops.' I was sent to Senlis, where I was under the orders of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, and I was given the duty of making a study of Plan H, in preparation for a possible invasion of Switzerland by the Central Powers."

He felt the blow very keenly, and the officer who carried the news to him was able to judge this by the violence of his reaction. But after the first

ebullitions of a justifiable anger—for he was by no means a docile victim—he mastered his wrath and took a more lofty view of his degradation. A politician among those who surrounded him suggested a manœuvre, a political subterfuge, to save his dignity. He refused to listen to this proposal, looked at the question solely as a soldier, sent in a protest to his superior officers, and then returned to duty.

"*Among those who have been reduced are many who have not again made good. They were offered a division, which they refused as it was not good enough for them. Mere pride! I would have accepted a division, anything rather than be idle. One of them was offered an army corps, which he refused because he wanted an army. He desired a command, so he went to the rear, and has done nothing since then. An army—why an army? What is the use of that? Your greatness does not depend on the size of your command, but on the manner in which you exercise it.*"

At a third conference held at Chantilly on December 15th–16th, 1916, it was decided to order a general offensive early in 1917 on every front and utilising all available forces. But, when this offensive was about to commence, realising the impossibility of its succeeding, a fourth conference held at Calais, on February 26th–27th, 1917, decided that General Nivelle should take charge.

"It is essential that there should be continuity of aim and perseverance of effort, otherwise nothing is achieved. In 1917, they decided to make an entire change. It was considered that we were not making sufficiently rapid progress. It was the first battle of army groups. The principle was sound, but possibly its application was still faulty. However, we had a method, that of successive attacks. This was the scheme which proved successful at a later stage. But they refused to wait. They believed in the one who promised more speedy progress. Well and good, but at such a rate one breaks one's back. . . . This was all the more regrettable because at that moment one might perhaps have finished the War.

"The materials were there, and it was felt that something could be done. Only, they should not have changed horses. That is not done when going uphill. Papa Joffre should have been allowed to make use of the resources which he had accumulated. The cart was given to Nivelle to pull. It soon got stuck in the mud. . . . Another change. . . . Then the task had to be started all over again. . . ."

The failure of this attempt threw everything into the melting-pot. The idea was entertained of setting up a permanent Inter-Allied military organisation, which would study and make preparations for the rapid transfer of troops from one

theatre of war to another. The command fell into the hands of councils and committees.

After Caporetto, while General Foch was hastening to the rescue of the Italians with a Franco-British force, the Prime Ministers of the various Governments, assembled at Rapallo, agreed on the establishment of a "Supreme War Council" with a permanent committee entrusted with the duty of supervising the general conduct of operations. The latter was only a consultative organisation, unsuitable for the undertaking of decisions and the speedy carrying-out of schemes, and it was, moreover, devoid of any executive powers.

This complicated structure was not destined to withstand for long the pressure of events. Its stability was speedily shaken when the vast eastern plains were over-run by new hordes of the enemy, released by the collapse of the Russian Empire.[1]

Public opinion, uneasy and alarmed by the imminence of a danger which is suspected, sought a solution, and, impelled by its intuition, looked for a man.

Now, among those who were available, one leader came more and more under the public eye. He was back from Italy, where his intervention on the morrow of a disaster had had the most favourable results. Moreover, he had become the adviser

[1] Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 15th December, 1917.

of the Government, with whom his views carried weight. His military knowledge, the existence of which had long been suspected, had definitely revealed itself. It inspired as much confidence as his character, which was becoming legendary. His faith in the final success, his coolness in the face of danger, the amplitude of his resources, the simplicity of his methods, his vigour and energy, his exalted conscience and his devotion to the common cause, added day by day to the number of his partisans. The mention of his name reminded the French of Saint-Gond and the Belgians of the Yser; the English recalled Flanders and the Italians the Piave. As for the Americans, they recognised a kindred spirit in this obstinate, practical and audacious character. The name of Foch was on every lip.

On February 11th, 1918, the Supreme Council of War met to discuss the establishment of a general Inter-Allied reserve. But who should command it? On the eve of the meeting, General Weygand, the French permanent representative on the Council, in a letter to the Government had summed up the situation as follows: "To-day, menaced by and perhaps on the eve of the most powerful effort that the enemy has ever made against us, there is neither a concerted plan nor a leader. When it is a question, not of deliberating, but of acting, a Council, no matter what its merits, cannot replace a Chief."

The Supreme War Council decided to vest its powers in an Executive Committee. Lloyd George was the mouthpiece of every member when he stated that, "It is desirable that this Committee should have a president to direct its discussions and make preparations for its decisions. No name is mentioned in the constitution of the Committee, but the members of the various Governments have mutually agreed upon this point, and nominated General Foch. There can be no doubt that the American generals will support him. His name inspires the fullest confidence in all the Allies, by reason of the military knowledge and experience of General Foch, and possibly still more because he is a soldier whose loyalty to the Alliance has been confirmed during this war."

"*It is Lloyd George,*" comments Foch, "*who contributed the most towards the attainment of the unified command. As early as the Rapallo Conference, when the Versailles Committee was set up—even earlier, as far back as the 17th October, 1914. He saw everything clearly. He even invented me! Ever since 1914 they had praised me in England. Lloyd George often said to me:* 'You are the man of the Saint-Pol programme.' '*Saint-Pol? What programme? I don't understand.*' 'Yes, you do. You remember quite well. It was the 17th October, 1914. You said to me: "*We are going to dig trenches: they want to break through. They shall*

not break through (ils ne passeront pas)." And they did not. You carried out your programme.' "

Unfortunately, this general reserve, created on paper by the Supreme War Council, could not be constituted. There were no resources! On March 14th and 15th, the Versailles Committee held a meeting in London. "*I was present with Clemenceau and Stephen Pichon. I had just been given the command of a striking force which did not exist.*[1] *I asked the English to share in the formation of this force by providing troops. Haig declared this impossible. Lloyd George supported him, Clemenceau accepted everything. . . . I wanted to say that we were not ready. We had had Allied battles before. I knew what that meant. In 1914, on the Piave, and elsewhere, I knew all about it! A new offensive was due, no preparations had been made, and nothing done. I was not allowed to speak.* 'The Governments are in agreement.' *The next day, when some question or other was raised, I had my chance, and I told them what I thought: An offensive is being prepared; nothing is ready to resist it, and we may find ourselves involved in a disaster. I wanted my views recorded on the minutes! They could not silence me. Lloyd George was staggered. But a vote had been taken. We broke up without any decision having been reached. A few days later the drama took place! The British had*

[1] The General Reserve.

given way before the German attack. Their line was broken."

On March 23rd Haig himself telephoned to ask for "someone to take charge of the War."

The 24th was a Sunday. Foch told M. Loucheur, Minister of Munitions, who, being uneasy, had wished to discuss the situation with him: "*It is serious, very serious, but it is in no sense desperate. You understand, I refuse to speak of a possible retreat. There can be no question of a retreat. The time has come when we must make both armies realise this to the fullest extent. Haig and Pétain have offered a magnificent resistance. The situation can be likened to a double door: each of the Generals is behind his half of the door without knowing who should push first in order to close the door. I quite understand their hesitation: the one who pushes first risks having his right or left wing turned. . . . If they had to be stopped, what would I do in their place? You know my method; I stick a wafer here, another there, a third by its side. . . . The Germans will hardly advance any further. A fourth wafer, and they will have stopped altogether.*"

Then, on that same day, he called on Clemenceau with a letter in which he had set out his opinion: "*Nothing is ready.*" The President replied: "You are deserting me." "*No, no, M. le Président, I am not deserting you, but we must have a supreme*

command, otherwise we shall be on the verge of disaster." "The Commanders-in-Chief are in agreement. I myself have frequently ensured liaison between them. I am personally in agreement with them." "*Yes, as long as you are with them. When you leave them, they each go to work in their own way, very conscientiously, but there is no liaison between them. There cannot be as matters stand at present, and the Germans are taking advantage of the fact. . . .*"

On the following day, as he was on the point of starting for Abbeville to meet the English, Clemenceau telephoned him: "There is a War Council at Compiègne." "*What about Abbeville?*" "Send Weygand there." "*It was then, while I was accompanying him to the Gare du Nord that I met M. Javery, the Director of Railway Communications, who said to me:* "If you do not save Amiens, everything is lost!" "*Well, we are going to try to.*" *At Compiègne, the meeting took place in a villa on the outskirts of the town, because the latter was being bombarded. Things were going badly! Haig was not there, and we could not arrive at any agreement. We should have had to go to Dury. But we could not inflict our difficulties on M. Clemenceau in the middle of the night. We therefore agreed to meet again on the following day, and returned to Paris. I was at my home, in the Avenue de Saxe, when Weygand called to tell me what he had heard*

from Field Marshal Haig and Wilson. The latter had gone back to Versailles, but he called on me the same evening to tell me: 'This is the proposal: M. Clemenceau will be in supreme command, with General Foch as his Chief of Staff.' '*That will not work*' . . . *M. Clemenceau knows nothing of leading armies or directing battles! Who then will take charge of affairs? There will be decisions to take—who will take them? Clemenceau will say:* 'I agree with Haig and Pétain.' *But it is not a matter of agreeing with them. He must command. Who will assume the responsibility?* . . . *No, it will not work!' We were all of the same opinion.*"

During this discussion, Foch did not content himself by criticising a solution which seemed to be a bad one. Logical with himself, he contemplated the only possible method: "*At the time of the battle of Ypres, General Joffre had given me the task of trying to bring about a better union between the English and French troops. If to-day I were placed in a similar position, I should need a greater degree of authority, conferred on me by the Allied Governments themselves.*"

There was no time for hesitation. The moment for a decision had arrived, and it could no longer be deferred. The position was serious, more serious than it had ever been, almost desperate. By the morrow, perhaps, all might have been irremediably lost. In this extreme, is there still a remedy? One

only. Necessary? Absolutely. Efficacious? It was to be hoped so. Certain? How could one say, as things were? It must be tried. Certain people were still opposed to it, but to no purpose. Everyone must assume his own responsibilities.

Foch definitely accepted his responsibilities. "*We are about to try to create events, not to submit to them.*" He knew that the unified command was the only means of salvation. He says so, repeats it, guarantees it, confirms it, demands it. This unified command must at once be established and entrusted to someone. But, to whom? He cannot ask for it for himself. If it is offered to him, he will not shirk the responsibility. He knows the gravity of the burden. He knows also that his sense of duty orders him to accept. He has given full consideration to the question. He cannot do otherwise. Circumstances demand it. Therefore, the sooner, the better. To-morrow may be even more difficult, and by the following day it may even be too late to attempt anything. It is necessary to act. But, nevertheless, he cannot thrust himself forward. He knows quite well what he is capable of doing. . . . Someone else might do equally well. The important point is that the unified command should come into being. He must with greater persuasiveness urge its necessity, press for it with greater energy.

Did he not write, in his *Principles of War*, these

lines inspired by the most extraordinary foresight, which to-day determine his line of action: "When the time comes to take decisions, to incur responsibilities, to make sacrifices—and these decisions must be taken before they are due, these responsibilities must be anticipated, the initiative must everywhere be ensured, and the offensive taken all along the line—where can we find men to carry out these enterprises, always of a perilous nature, if not among the greater minds, always eager for responsibility? Among those who, steeped to the core with the will to conquer, finding in this will, as also in the clear vision of the only means which lead to victory, the energy unhesitatingly to exercise the most formidable powers, the energy to risk all, even their honour; for a beaten general is a leader deprived of his qualifications."

The night passes. They meet again on the following day at Doullens. The position is examined: "*There is not a foot of ground to lose. It is necessary to cling to what we hold. Remember October 1914. . . . The enemy has struck just where the two halves of the door meet. He has pushed them back on Haig and Pétain. New strength is necessary to force them together again. . . . Above all, do not give the troops a line on which to fall back, otherwise they will tend to retire too precipitately.*" The English representatives [1] arrive. The

[1] Lord Milner and Haig.

discussion becomes general. The defence of Amiens is mentioned. "*We must win in front of Amiens. We must win where we now stand. As we could not hold them on the Somme, we must no longer fall back an inch.*" It is then proposed to give General Foch the command in the Amiens sector. "No, on the whole Western Front," says Haig. Everyone agrees.[1] "*I am to co-ordinate? Very well!*" Foch accepted.

On the way to lunch at the *Hôtel des Quatre Fils Aymond*, Clemenceau came and said to him: "Well! You have had your own way." "*Yes! A nice mess! You give me a lost battle, and tell me to win it.*" "Anyhow, you have got what you wanted!" Loucheur then intervened: "You should not say that, *M. le Président*. General Foch accepts through his patriotism, but it is no pleasure to him!"

There are few things except the highest conception of duty which can incite a reasonable human being deliberately to essay an impossible task, with the risk of eternal ignominy in the event of failure, but with the sole hope, of no value to a noble mind, of claiming as a reward for success the title of saviour of the country.

He who, careless of his life, voluntarily offers without hesitation to face unknown dangers in

[1] Agreement of Doullens, March 26th, 1918. "General Foch is entrusted by the British and French Governments with the co-ordination of the movements of the Allied Armies on the Western Front."

order to bring in a wounded comrade or to secure necessary information—he is the heroic soldier. He who in desperate circumstances, regardless of his fame, and willing to risk his reputation, demands and accepts the dangerous mission of leading to battle nations in arms fighting for their liberty—he is the heroic chief.

To his wife, who was perturbed at seeing him shoulder so heavy a burden, Foch merely replied, "*God grant that it may not be too late.*" To his boyhood's friend, Colonel Graeff, who was similarly alarmed, "You are accepting the Supreme Command? Do you realise what it involves? "*Yes. I fully realise it. I shall succeed.*"

Public opinion regards the unified command, now an accomplished fact and entrusted to Foch, as a promise of safety. In the gloom of the storm which is still raging, the dim light of a beacon begins to be visible. The agonising strain relaxes. One more effort. It shall be tried.

But for the new Chief, is there any change? Heavier and more overwhelming responsibilities? That question does not arise. Have the Allied troops been increased? Not by a single man. And those of the enemy? They have not a man less. The aim is the same, the enemy remains to be beaten. The unified command is but a means to this end. The solution is victory. What is he given to attain this? Resources? None. Possibilities? They should suffice for him. One remembers the manner in which he is able to avail himself of such possibilities. The heavy contribution which the situation demands must therefore come from himself alone. He will provide it. He has been preparing for it for the last forty-five years. The hour has come. *Allons-y!*

On the evening of the 26th of March, on returning to his G.H.Q., the *Generalissimo* met at

Dury General Gough, commanding the 5th Army, which, having been broken through in front of Saint-Quentin, had had to fall back from the Somme-Peronne line.

"*What are you doing here?*" . . . "I was waiting for you." . . . "*You should not wait for me in that way without doing anything, or else your Corps Commanders will be on your heels, and everyone will stampede. Go forward; the whole line will stand fast, and so will your own men. I am straightening things out. I am giving a few orders. . . . I was beginning to co-ordinate; it is quite simple.*"

Whether the question was simple or not, it had to be solved. "*We must not be alarmed; we must get over the difficulty.*"

Indeed, without for one moment being dismayed by the terribly serious state of affairs, and retaining all his clearness of mind, his common sense, and his objectivity, towards this crisis on which the fate of the world depended, the *Generalissimo* took stock and drew up his programme.

"*You see how matters stood when I assumed the command of the Allied Armies in 1918? The Germans attacked at the point of juncture between the British armies and our own. The line was dented; one Ally could only see the Channel, the other the capital. They said to me:* 'There are the Channel ports and Paris. Which are you going to defend—

the ports or Paris?' '*Both.*' 'But if you have to let one or the other go?' '*I shall let nothing go.*' 'But if you really have to?' '*I shall hold on and defend both: nothing shall be let go.*' . . . *There is nothing to be let go.* . . . *I did not let anything go!*

"*What was to be done? We could not afford to lose a yard of ground, and, above all, it was necessary to maintain liaison with the Allies. To do that, the first thing to do was to hold the enemy and to stand fast. There was only one method of doing this—to reorganise, cost what it might, in the positions which we held and with our feeble resources. Only after that could we think of reliefs. Then we must also counter-attack in order to break down offensives.* . . . *But even this is insufficient; we must conquer, that is to say, attack. To do that, we must have reserves. After that, to build them up.*"

He sets up his quarters at Beauvais,[1] in the middle of the theatre of operations. There is no time to waste. His plan is clear. Its simplicity constitutes its strength. To carry it out, he explains it to those who will carry it out. He himself goes to repeat it to all concerned, to Haig and Pétain, Fayolle, Debeney, and Humbert. Refraining from recriminations on what has happened in the past, he studies

[1] April 3rd: Conference at Beauvais. "General Foch is entrusted by the British, French, and American Governments with the duty of co-ordinating the movements of the Allied Armies on the Western Front. The strategic direction of military operations devolves upon him."

the situation. The gap is open; if it widens, there will be a catastrophe. There is only one remedy—to resist to the bitter end on the line now held.

The battle of Amiens takes place. While the British Armies resist foot by foot, thirty Divisions and more than twenty regiments of heavy artillery are hurried up from all parts of the French front. Thrown into the fray as they happen to be detrained, they determine the rate of progress of the enemy and maintain liaison between the Allied Armies. On April 3rd: "*The enemy is held from Arras to the Oise.*"

Further German offensives are anticipated. They once more take place against the English front and at the point of juncture between the French and British forces. At the urgent request of the Chief, who has foreseen these attacks, the Belgians extend their front, Field-Marshal Haig holds firmly to his positions, and our troops hasten to his aid. The attacks come to nothing.

As a first result, this is splendid. But, compared with what remains to be done, nothing has yet been accomplished. From now onwards, the chief matter is to constitute reserves. With what? The Flanders attacks have so depleted the English forces that the General Staff is contemplating the abolition of nine Divisions. This is the opposite to what is needed. The *Generalissimo* protests. The reply is that it is necessary. He refuses to hear of it, urges

that it is only necessary to send reinforcements in greater numbers in order to refill the depleted units, and, moreover, asks for British tanks. A compromise is suggested to him: the Divisions will be re-formed, but sent to a quiet sector. He points out the danger of this solution, and only accepts it as a temporary compromise, and asks for a return to common-sense methods as early as possible. Eventually, it is admitted that he is right. His resilient tenacity has the result that the British Government changes its mind, admits that all the units are fit for battle, and agrees to despatch the necessary reinforcements (May 20th).

Since, in the meantime, the Conference of Abbeville (May 2nd [1]) has extended his command to cover the whole of the Western Front in Europe, the *Generalissimo* is able to survey the combined actions on the Italian, French, and British fronts. These increased powers endow the Chief with new opportunities. General Foch seeks them out in order to study them, weigh them up, and, if possible, utilise them. He thinks of them continually while travelling at top speed during his motor trips; amid a conversation of any kind, or a serious discussion, there comes to him—the fruits of the latent efforts of his mind—an idea of which he barely catches a glimpse, and which he cannot at the moment try

[1] On April 14th, 1918, General Foch had been appointed "General Officer Commanding in Chief the Allied Armies in France." At the Abbeville Conference, his powers were extended to cover the Italian front.

to elaborate. He does not pursue it. Nothing must be left to chance. It may have tremendous consequences. It must be looked into. He expresses his idea, and adds in conclusion: "*Think over it. . . . We will see what happens.*" He returns to it later, for he forgets nothing. He knows that "an idea does not come in two words," that one must turn it over in the mind and explore its possibilities. He holds that "*the great events in history are not the result of accidents.*" No effect without a cause. No harvest without seed: he is a sower.

The immediate danger seems to have passed. The preparations were being completed, but so delicate and so full of difficulties are they, that even the activity of the Chief himself cannot accelerate them without danger. There is a difference between action and over-precipitateness.

The sky is heavy but calm, when suddenly, with no signs of warning, comes a vast tidal wave. The stormy rollers break in serried ranks upon the shore, which they overflow and destroy as they pass on. On all sides, torrents pour into the land behind. The flood gains speed; the harvesters, caught in the middle of their work, vainly seek to flee, and are drowned. The destroying tide rises. The plain becomes a sea. A disaster has happened. On May 27th, the Germans release thirty Divisions to attack the Chemin des Dames, nineteen of which are in the foremost wave. During the night of the 28th, a re-

entrant 60 kilometres wide and more than 20 deep has been made in our line. On the 29th, it reaches the Marne, and on the 31st, over a front of 20 kilometres, from Dormans to Château-Thierry, the river-bank is reached. The line from Paris to Nancy is cut, and the capital threatened. The dyke has given way. The German General Staff throws all its forces into the venture.

Is everything lost? No!

The *Generalissimo,* immovable, retains his coolness and his confidence, because he knows. There is nothing to worry about, still less is there any cause for stampede. He knows the strength of the opposing forces, the reserves at the disposal of the enemy, and the capabilities of the latter. More than all, he knows what he himself *wills.* Nothing will be able to make him turn aside from the road which he has taken, and which will lead him to his goal. It is a terrible misfortune, but it will merely delay his progress. Come what may, the situation must be grappled with. In order to consolidate his front, General Foch collects men from all quarters, asks the Belgians and English to take over more line in order to release his own troops, and, while borrowing men from Field-Marshal Haig, urges him to undertake vigorous action on his own front. He goes from one commander to the other, restores their courage, demands of them still more energy, activity, and vigilance. Supported at this juncture

by Clemenceau and encouraged by the confidence placed in him, he straightens his back, stiffens his muscles, summons all his will-power, and in a powerful manner sustains the attack, resists, and recovers his equilibrium.

On June 5th, "*the tidal wave had spent its force on the embankment.*"

In fact, the tide is at the ebb. On June 9th, the enemy launches eighteen Divisions against our front between Noyon and Montdidier. The counter-attack is quickly made, with astonishing results.

"*On June 11th, 1918, Mangin showed astounding strength. . . . I saw him on the 10th; he had to counter-attack on the Oise with five Divisions. One had arrived, the second was just detraining, the third was expected during the evening, the fourth at midnight, and the fifth later still. He said to me:* 'I shall attack to-morrow.' "

Fayolle, who had made the preparations for this offensive, preferred to defer the attack. "You can never do it! Wait a couple of days!" "*I replied to Fayolle: 'Let him go ahead!' Indeed, Mangin was fully prepared; he had summoned his divisional commanders, and his artillery officers had been instructed to reconnoitre the ground. He had arranged everything and was ready to act. He attacked. He succeeded. . . . He wished to push on. We had to stop him, and to keep on stopping*

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him." The tide had reached high-water mark, and was beginning to turn already.

Negative as their results might seem at the time, these two and a half months of obstinate defence had changed the course of the War. The great German offensive, although it had broken our front on several occasions, only resulted in a few territorial gains. The Allied forces, in spite of repeated reverses, had held firm. The two antagonists were deadlocked, but it was already becoming evident which of them would overthrow the other.

Foch had passed through a severe trial, from which he emerged stronger than ever. By accepting command in a desperate situation, he had displayed a greatness of mind which nothing could increase. But, under the heavy blows of misfortune, his character had become ever more highly tempered. Peril had rendered his faith more ardent still. Each new danger had stimulated his intelligence and intensified his imaginative powers; each difficulty proved the soundness of his methods and established his authority; his energy increased tenfold every day, and his strength of will became firmer than ever. The leader who inspired so much confidence in others had during this long battle added to his reputation. Until then, however, he had never had the opportunity of displaying his full powers.

Like an architect called in to save from collapse

a building whose roof has been split by an earthquake, its columns shaken, its walls cracked, its front gaping and trembling on its foundations—a building which seems likely to fall down at the next movement of a soil which is shaken by subterranean disturbances—Foch had first of all to safeguard his foundations, support his vaultings, underpin his walls, consolidate the whole structure, look to his drainage channels, and clear the ground. All this he did, and while so doing he was at the same time able, thanks to his enterprise, skill, and foresight, to make ready his plans, provide his materials, and select his workmen. Now, at last, he is able to commence his constructive work.

He knows what he intends to do, and also what he is able to do. He has tried his means, which have stood the test. His principles of leadership have been verified by his achievements. His theories have been shown to be successful when translated into practice.

"*It is not sufficient to issue orders! It is necessary to see that they are executed; people must be watched, one must always have them under one's eye. Believe me, if the duties of a commander were merely those of giving orders, it would not be a difficult task. He must ensure that they are carried out. The commander-in-chief must exercise supervisory functions. When I commanded the Allied Armies, I always had the means of ensuring this*

supervision; I used to send Desticker here, Pagezy there. I kept in touch with the execution of my orders; they kept me posted. Obviously, when one has subordinates whom one trusts, they can be given liberty of action, but it is always necessary to be certain that orders are carried out. That is the whole secret.

"During the War, I spent my time in travelling from place to place; I visited the commanders-in-chief, and the general officers commanding Army Corps and even Divisions. When I knew that one of them was in a tight corner, I went back to see him several times in one day. . . .

"You see, the unified command is only a word. It was tried in 1917 under Nivelle, and it did not work. One must know how to lead the Allies—one does not command them. Some must be treated differently from the others. The English are English, the Americans are another matter, and similarly with the Belgians and Italians. I could not deal with the Allied generals as I did with our own. They also were brave men who were representing the interests of their own country. They saw things in a different light from ourselves. They agreed with reluctance to the unified command; although they loyally accepted the situation, a mere trifle might have upset them and dislocated the whole scheme. I could not give them orders in an imperative manner. One cannot work to a system, especially with

them! Anything might have happened. It was necessary to hear their views, otherwise they would have kicked. . . . People only carry out orders which they understand perfectly, and decisions which they have made themselves, or which they have seen made.

"Accordingly, when important decisions were involved, I used to see them, or asked them to see me. We talked and discussed questions between ourselves, and, without seeming to do so, I gradually won them over to my point of view. I provided them with a solution, but I did not force it upon them. They were satisfied. I did my best to convince them. Perhaps it was rather a lengthy process, but we always got there. A talk in the morning, another in the evening, for several days if necessary. And, when I had made them see my point, I left them, but with a written note which we had prepared with Weygand's assistance. I gave it to them without appearing to attach much importance to it. 'This is a summary of my ideas. It agrees with your own in principle. Perhaps you will glance through it; come and see me again and we will go into it together.' A few days later they would adopt this decision, made it their own, and became keen on ensuring its success. If handled differently, they would have strained at their chain if I had made them too much aware of it!

"That is the method which I adopted with

French in 1914, with Diaz in 1917, and with the others in 1918. That is the true spirit of the unified command—not to give orders, but to make suggestions. . . . They look into the question. At first they are surprised, then they move. Do you know, I carried them on my shoulders the whole time. Exactly! We used to meet Haig twice a week. We met half-way, at Mouchy. That is why, in such circumstances, Weygand was so valuable to me. He was patient. He used to return to them, go into the question again, explain my point of view, and persuade them. Is not that the meaning of Inter-Allied command? One talks, one discusses, one persuades, one does not give orders. . . . One says: 'That is what should be done; it is simple; it is only necessary to will it.' That cannot be done on paper; a man is needed! Don't say that it is a difficult problem: it is hardly a problem at all. We have brains, and they are given to us to use."

Early in June, General Foch moved his quarters to Bombon, a château situated in a remote part of the great plain of the Ile-de-France, to the south-east of Paris. "*Silence is necessary for the concentration of ideas.*" He chose a more central position in relation to the whole line of the front. "*Look at the map; get well back from it in order to see it better as a whole.*" There he will pass the eve of the great fight. He wishes to have a battle commensurate with the results he expects. He has made every

preparation including even an influx of new American troops. At the first opportunity, since he has the knowledge, the power, and the will, he will act.

On July 15th, at 4.15 a.m., the Germans opened a great drive between Château-Thierry and Massiges. The new defensive tactics proved to be wonderfully successful. To the east of Rheims, by noon, Gouraud's Army was master of the situation.

From now onwards, Foch holds the upper hand.

On July 18th, he releases his counter-offensive, which he has foreseen and prepared for. Five French Armies, holding the enemy in a formidable grip, compel him hastily to fall back across the Marne.

Victory now reaches his "inclined plane." Foch pushes it forward with all his strength. At last he is able to endow his movements with that accelerated rhythm so dear to his temperament.

"*He does not know the advantages of speed,*" he said of one of his subordinates. "*He likes his work cut up into portions: but I do not; I prefer a tremendous rush!*"

With his intelligence, fully cognisant of modern ideas, he adapts them to his profession—the power of speed, the value of technical improvements, industrialisation of methods. He uses a machine-tool. He applies it at the point selected, directs it, governs it, and, with his ear listening to the humming of

the motor, he exerts all the power at his disposal to overcome resistance, and, while the chips are flying around him, he advances the spark and "steps on the gas." Faced by this problem of output, he brings to bear all the factors which may yield increased returns: confidence in the instrument used and loved by him, precision and care in its management, regard to its maximum efficiency. He is a chief engineer who might be an artist, a workman-poet, an idealist who achieves results.

"*Thus, on July 24th, 1918, six days after the counter-offensive had opened, I had assembled my commanders-in-chief and given them my plan. They all thought me mad. I said to them: 'We will meet again in four days, and you will report to me in writing.' Four days later, they had all moved forward.*"

On August 4th, the second victory of the Marne had been won. Soissons and Château-Thierry had been recaptured, and Paris freed. On August 7th, General Foch was made Marshal of France. "*It is not a wreath of flowers on a grave. If it had been, I should not have wanted it. We must at once exploit the change in the military situation. . . . We must strike harder than ever. . . . I am always ready to hustle people; I stick the spur into them.*"

The following day, August 8th, was a "day of mourning for the German Army." [1] The Canadians

[1] Ludendorff's Memoirs.

and the Australians in Rawlinson's 4th British Army, and Debeney's 1st French Army, attacked between Amiens and Montdidier. They dislodged the enemy, at certain points driving him back 15 kilometres. Marshal Foch moves his G.H.Q. to Sarcus, between Amiens and Beauvais. Being visited there by General Pershing, he urges him to carry out as soon as possible the operations contemplated in the Woevre. He sends Desticker [1] with a letter to Debeney: "*Push the 31st Corps forward urgently to Roye: it is there that the great decision will be achieved.*" He gives these instructions to Haig and Pétain: "*The activities of the 4th British Army and the 1st French Army should be directed towards Ham. The advance of the 3rd French Army should be pursued in the direction of Lassigny-Noyon. In addition, preparations should be made as soon as possible for advances in the general direction of Bapaume and Péronne.*" All his generals replied, "But we have no forces available!" "*Go ahead, nevertheless!*" The result was that the Paris-Amiens railway line was freed, the Montdidier salient reduced, 40,000 prisoners and 700 guns captured. But that was not enough. "*We must abandon nothing until we have done all we can.*"

Here are his comments on his attempt to avoid the same error as the Germans: "*Is the mainspring broken? We must think of some means of replac-*

[1] Second-in-command of his General Staff.

ing it. . . . Has the music stopped? Are we tired of the tune? We must start a new one. Never stop. Remember, in August 1918, when we had to exploit our first successes, when Amiens was saved. Could we break through? We all knew: we should throw our reserves into a ground already devastated, and on which the enemy was rebuilding his defences. . . . We then tried to extend the battle to the flanks, to grip the enemy on a wider front. That succeeded."

What a variety of methods, what powers of adaptation, what fertility of imagination! After a defensive action, strong and resilient as a spring which, yielding, resists and stiffens, comes the plan for the offensive, simple yet vast in its conception, bold yet fully thought out, as full of vigour and tenacity as of wisdom and studied purpose.

"The move is general; everyone goes forward."

On August 11th the Marshal telegraphs to Diaz, urging him to attack. On the 17th, he sends Mangin's 10th French Army forward between the Oise and the Aisne.

Regarding the 21st, he writes to Haig: *"I am counting on the attack of your 3rd Army being pressed violently, and that the neighbouring Divisions will go forward at the same time."* Three days after this success: *"Things are going well. I cannot help applauding the resolute manner in which you pursue the enemy without allowing him*

any respite, and at the same time increasing the scale of your operations. It is such an offensive, ever increasing in extent, fed from the rear and strongly pressed on from the front, with no objective, with no regard for alignment or for too close liaison, which will yield the best results with the smallest losses, as you have already perfectly understood."

On August 30th Mangin's Army once more advances, and drives the enemy back to the north of Soissons. This enables Berthelot's 5th Army and Degouette's 6th Army to make an advance of 4 kilometres on a front of 30 kilometres.

On September 2nd Horne's 1st British Army, in the north, attacks in its turn on the Arras-Cambrai road, and penetrates to a depth of 20 kilometres into the German lines, where it captures 10,000 prisoners.

In support to this flank success, the centre armies, under Humbert, Debeney, Rawlinson, and Byng, increase their rate of progress. By September 8th, in a month, the battle of Picardy, which has now taken in the whole front from Ypres to Rheims, has had considerable results—150,000 prisoners, including 3,000 officers, 2,000 guns, 13,000 machine-guns, and the recapture of all the ground lost in March.

A moment's halt? No. Less than ever. The successes already achieved? Matters of the past. The future is not ensured, the objective not attained.

It is coming in sight; all the more reason to redouble one's vigour and energy. There are obstacles still to overcome. The rate of acceleration must not be allowed to slacken. Fatigue is great, and losses have been heavy. Doubtless; but the enemy is worn out, bewildered, at bay; he must be pressed on all sides.

"*Above all, lose no time. You tell me that you have no men. You have. Their numbers are insufficient? Believe me—go on! It is with the survivors that battles are won. Obviously, an undertaking cannot be commenced with no resources, but it is concluded with none left. You know, victorious armies have always been ragged and dirty!*"

The decisive moment has arrived; what is needed is a strong mind, breadth and distance of vision. But realities, not dreams, are needed. The march upon Mézières, the whole of the Allied Armies concentrating on one goal? Yes—but no improvisations. First of all there must be established a jumping-off point from which a general offensive can be started. "*Like a parrot climbing a ladder, we must get a firm grip on one rung before reaching out for the next.*"

In the east, the Americans will straighten out the bulge at Saint-Mihiel. In the centre, the Franco-British troops will exert a closer pressure on the

enormous bulwark which the Germans have been fortifying for months—the Hindenburg line.

He has made up his mind; the final instructions are issued. Every commander knows what he has to do. On either wing, the Belgian and American Armies are to take part in the battle. The whole front, from the sea to the Meuse, is to be galvanised into activity, as part of the converging movement of all the Allied forces.

Everything ready? Let go! The line moves forward with a rush. It is the flight towards victory. The obstacle is overcome.

On September 26th commences the great concentric attack.

In Champagne, Rheims is freed. In the Argonne, Montfaucon is recaptured by the Americans. Between the Aisne and the Oise, Vouziers and Laon again fall into French hands. In the Cambrai region, three British and one French army free Saint-Quentin and re-take Cambrai itself. In Flanders the Belgian, British, and French Armies free Ypres and Dixmude and recapture Lens and Armentières. On October 12th the formidable Hindenburg line yields to the Allied assaults.

The enemy is at bay; he is on the verge of disaster. Marshal Foch looks beyond the approaching victory. These are the objectives at which he aims, and which he already demands: "*Cession of the whole*

territory, including Alsace-Lorraine. Occupation of the Rhineland. A strong bridge-head on the right bank of the Rhine." [1]

A further effort is necessary to attain these objectives. He does not cease from demanding further sacrifices from his armies, which are tired out, but whose morale is excellent. He pushes them to attack along the whole front, giving them the three converging directions of Brussels, the Sambre, and Mézières. The Belgians then reach Ostend, and make headway towards Malines and Ghent. The English occupy Tourcoing, and enter Valenciennes, Quesnoy, and Landrecies. In the centre and in the east, the enemy holds desperately and energetically to their final positions, organised some time before, behind the Hindenburg line. However, the *Hundig* and the *Brunhilde Stellungen* fall into the hands of Debeney, Mangin, and Berthelot, and the *Michel Stellung* into those of Gouraud and the Americans.

On November 5th the enemy is forced to order a general withdrawal to the line Mézières-Namur-Brussels. The Allied Armies are sent to follow him up.

They advance in all directions. The joy of the regained villages is a reward for their efforts. The Marshal congratulates them, and pushes them for-

[1] Note dated October 8th to the Prime Minister.

ward. In Lorraine, he is preparing a further advance in the direction of the Saar. "*The chief thing is not to wait until the troops are ready, but to strike quickly.*"

On a front of 400 kilometres, more than 200 Divisions are advancing, capturing prisoners in thousands, and whole dumps of materials.

On November 6th a German wireless message announces that the German plenipotentiaries had started for the Western Front. On November 8th, at 9 a.m., the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces received them in his carriage at the station of Rethondes.

"*It was the best day in my life. . . . When I saw them in front of me, on the other side of the table, I said to myself: 'There is the German Empire.' I can assure you that I was a proud man!*

"*I thought: 'We will be polite, but we must show them who we are.'*

"*I asked them: 'Who are you?' They gave their names. 'Have you any papers? We must examine them.' Then I asked them: 'What do you want?'* 'We wish to know your proposals.' '*I have no proposals to make.*' 'We would like to know upon what conditions an armistice would be granted.' '*I have no conditions to give you.' Erzberger wished to read me a paper—President Wilson's note—but I stopped him. 'Do you wish to ask for an armistice?*

If so, say so.' 'We ask for an armistice.' *'Good. We will read you the conditions drawn up by the Allied Governments.'*

"They were weary, tired out, like hunted animals. . . . Erzberger made me a long speech in order to secure concessions, explaining that revolution had broken out at home, that their soldiers would no longer obey orders, that the country was in a state of famine, that all authority had disappeared. I stopped him! 'You are suffering from a loser's malady, not a conqueror's. I am not afraid of it. I refuse everything.' And, as you know, I should have adhered to my decision. Immediately afterwards, I wrote to the chiefs of the Allied Armies: 'Redouble your energy in order to consolidate the results attained by our victories.'

"I only stopped because we held the Rhine. Without the Rhine we should have gained nothing. Holding the Rhine, our minds were at ease. . . . I always used to say that one did not fight for the sake of fighting, but to obtain results. Having secured these results, no one had the right to go on fighting. . . . We had to have the Rhine. We had it. We could sign the peace which we wanted. We had no right to continue shedding blood.

"You understand that if you sign an armistice, you must hold a commanding position. With us on the Rhine, they were helpless. We were the masters. If we had not been there, they would have pre-

pared defences in readiness for us. . . . On November 11th they gave us what we asked for. The interview at Rethondes. Was not that a deed? It marked the disintegration of the German Empire, and I saw Erzberger brandish his pen and grind his teeth when he signed the document. I was then glad that I had exerted my will, and employed the means of exerting it, for the business was settled. . . .

"That last night we spent in my train at Rethondes. We slept but little. During the evening, we had resumed our discussions. I lay down from 11 p.m. to 1.30 a.m. Then we started arguing again until 5.15 in the morning. At last they signed. There was a pile of papers to be dealt with. Weygand took charge of everything while I had an hour's rest. At 7 o'clock I went to Paris with the Armistice in my pocket. It was a foggy morning, but the sun came out later! I called on M. Clemenceau and M. Poincaré. Then I went home, to the Avenue de Saxe,[1] to let my family know the good news. It was a market day, and, while I was having my lunch, they saw my car standing outside. They then commenced a demonstration under my windows. So I went off. I was recognised in the Place de l'Opéra. There was a bigger demonstration than ever, and people began to cheer. It seemed likely that they would drag me out of my car. But I

[1] At that time the Marshal lived at No. 52 Avenue de Saxe. Twice a week a street market is held in this avenue.

wanted to get away. . . . We succeeded in giving them the slip in the Rue Lafayette. . . . I took cover at G.H.Q.

"No, I did not see the spontaneous display of flags in the capital, but in the suburbs I met the crowds on their way to Paris.

"Joy over delivery . . . but there was something more than that. It was victory—I repeat, victory. We could do what we wished with it."

March 26th to November 11th—a battle lasting seven months and a half; a tragic sum of superhuman efforts sustained by duty and faith. A work of will and a masterpiece of intelligence. A proof of genius, sowing of energy, harvest of glory. The result of method applied by character. The culminating point of a life of hard work devoted to the country. After weeks of struggles, nights of misery, days of gloom, mornings of vision, evenings of hope, thousands of hours so full of events, so grave in their consequences, so rich in courage, painful yet fertile, moments of vivid divination resulting in a decision, instants in which your fate has lain in your own hands, between your fingers —he who has lived through such times, and forced from them the gift of final victory, he, in the enthusiasm of triumph, has not wasted his life.

He deserves the supreme recompense which, on the day following the victory, he himself accorded to those who had helped him to conquer.

"You have won the greatest battle in history, and have saved the most sacred of causes, the liberty of the world.

"Be proud. You have adorned your colours with an immortal glory. Posterity reserves its gratitude for you."

THE VICTOR AFTER THE VICTORY

On the morning of November 11th, when handing to the President the acceptance of the Armistice signed by the German plenipotentiaries, Marshal Foch said to M. Clemenceau: "*My work is finished; your work begins.*"

Like the soldiers of former days who, after their victory, laid down their arms before their country's altar, and became citizens again, the Marshal, the military chief of the most formidable army which ever one man commanded, simply reported what he had done, and asked for new orders.

"*The Allied Governments had entrusted their armies to me: with their aid I have gained the victory. I was ordered to do so. It was not easy. But I have succeeded. My mission is accomplished, I return to my job.*"

Each man to his trade. His was to fight, and to prescribe his conditions. His means for action were the Allied Armies. They must now remain with their arms close at hand. He retains the command, ready to start again if necessary. Authority is vested in the nations, who have entrusted it to the Governments which they have elected. It is for those who exercise the power to assume the responsibility.

"If everyone does his own job, everything will go well. If everyone wants to do his neighbour's work, there will be a muddle."

The news of delivery was received with manifestations of enthusiasm. After so much restraint, so much misery and suffering, what a release, what hope, what happiness!

At first this joy was unalloyed. The victorious armies reached the Rhine. In Alsace and Lorraine our troops were received with the most heartfelt gratitude.

The liberator had his share in this. To the delirious populace, their cries of *"Vive la France!"* and *"Vive Foch!"* had the same meaning.

"When I returned to Metz for the first time after the Armistice, on November 25th, we arrived with Weygand at 11 o'clock at night. We were received in the Emperor's waiting-room. Motor-cars were awaiting us, but I did not wish to take one. I was so happy that I said to Weygand: 'Here, have a good cigar, and let's go for a stroll.' I took him round Metz for an hour without letting him go. The weather was atrocious. The streets were covered with snow, and there was no one about. In the squares we saw Boche statues which had been dragged from their plinths and thrown on the ground. Yes, I shall certainly never forget it!

"The next day, I first of all reviewed the troops at the Ile Chambière. Then there was a municipal

reception. Ah! To see French troops marching past on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville at Metz was an ample reward for my efforts. There stands the statue of Fabert. It is quite a small one, and yet three-quarters of our history is inscribed on it. After the official ceremony, I said: 'Now I am going to thank the Lord of Hosts for having granted me the victory. The troops can dismiss.' Everyone followed me. I have never seen such a crowd as there was at the Cathedral for this 'Te Deum.' Yes, I have; at Malines, when we went there with M. Poincaré to hand the Croix de Guerre to Cardinal Mercier. . . . It was extraordinary. When it was all over, the crowd sang the 'Marseillaise' in the church."

It was there, as at the Collège of Saint-Clément, to which on such a memorable day he did not fail to return, that the Marshal could in the simplest way realise the happy termination of the War and the result of his efforts.

A few days later, during further ovations, the excitement of a young girl wearing a large black satin bow occasioned in him a most touching emotion. "*During the famous march past at Strasbourg, on December 9th, 1918, the Alsatians were remarkable for their orderliness, their seriousness, and their gravity. They gave one the impression of people who are giving vent to their feelings, but who realise that they are doing so. The enthusiasm was indescribable. A young Alsatian girl of the bet-*

ter class, with an intelligent face, had managed to scramble on to the stand between the President of the Senate and myself. She cried continually: 'C'est magnifique! C'est magnifique!' *She replied to all my questions:* 'C'est magnifique!' *and I could extract no other answer from her. And she went on in this strain during the whole time the troops were marching past. She was out of her mind with joy.*"

The rejoicings went on for some time longer. But this could not last. It began to be necessary to think about the Peace! The situation soon began to be one of difficulty. After so many and so violent upheavals, equilibrium could not be attained without incidents. The Marshal expected them, and was not surprised when they occurred. "*During the whole of the War, I repeated to every Government of every country: 'You can ask what you will when Victory comes; people will always consider that you have not asked for enough. When the people have given to the utmost, as they have done, they will demand their dues, and will never be satisfied.' I said to the Governments: 'You will all have your turn.' Moreover, to succeed in peace-time is at least as difficult as to succeed in war-time. It is not the same thing. It requires patience. No tangible sign of victory is gained. One cannot give the immediate reward which produces authority. The most difficult matter is to hold out.*"

The crowned heads of England, Belgium, and

Italy, each in turn, came to Paris in order that we could testify to our affection and gratitude. Then came the President of the United States. After him arrived the representatives sent by all the Allied and Associated Powers to participate in the Paris Conference. They were so numerous that it appeared impossible, if all took part, to conduct speedily negotiations which at the outset were recognised as extraordinarily vast, thorny, and delicate. The heads of the Governments of the Great Powers decided to form a "Council of State" consisting only of President Wilson, M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, and Signor Orlando. But he who had won the war? He would be consulted if necessary. Thus the Governments set to work.

Paris became the centre of the world. Alas! People rightly recalled the story of the Tower of Babel! Through the gates of the city, flung wide open, in these times of confidence and rejoicing, stealthily crept all manner of private interests, prejudices, conceits. Timidly at first, then openly, they revealed themselves—numerous, tenacious, greedy. During periods of great danger we had succeeded so well in mastering them, silencing them, and rejecting them, that we hardly thought they could return. And again, everything seemed so fine, the future so promising! We paid but little heed to them. Their strength thus increased. One man was wanted, and there were four! Was that

the best method of solving difficulties which daily became more numerous, more serious? Fallacious promises increased this state of disbalance. "Germany will pay!" This made the fever worse. The situation was uncertain; money was losing its value. The same applied to public morals. There was an eager pursuit of pleasure, a general tendency to gratify the appetites. The lowest of instincts, long restrained, were getting the upper hand, and no one any longer attempted to conceal the fact. The example was set by those in authority. Once more disadvantage of coalitions: the sharing of the plunder, the distribution of the assets!

"I said to the Government: 'I can understand the Allies not holding our views . . . but for you of all people to abandon them! . . . Never! . . .' They refused to listen to me. I demanded a hearing by the Council of Ministers. I took my precautions; I handed them a paper. They thanked me, but took no notice of it. We left with Jules Cambon and André Tardieu, who was no longer a Minister. It was on this occasion that I said: 'We shall all be accused of treason, because the nation will never understand that from our victory bankruptcy is likely to come.'"

The Marshal knew what he willed, and knew how to attain his will. The Rhine. He had for a long time, always, been asking for it. To secure it he had fought and won. To keep it he would fight

again: "*The Rhine! If for various reasons we are unable to annex it, it should at least remain as a kind of frontier between Germany and the western provinces. Come what may, we must have firm guarantees. What would you say of a garden whose fruits had been coveted for centuries by the same marauders, and in which, when they were ejected, it was considered sufficient to affix a notice: 'Trespassers will be prosecuted.'?*"

The characters of the two French leaders, civil and military, were in marked antithesis. "*I have had frequent squabbles with Clemenceau. The most serious arose out of the incident on May 17th, when he wanted me to send for the German plenipotentiaries before the treaty was signed. I refused to send the message. I said, 'No, I do not understand.'* 'You do not need to understand.' '*Yes, I do, or I shall wire, "By Order of M. Clemenceau."*' *He would not agree to that, of course. He wanted me to sign the message. In his eyes, discipline is like that described in de Vigny's* Canne de Jonc. . . . *No! I sign nothing which I do not understand. Eventually he sent the telegram himself.*"

The problem of working out the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was so difficult that the discussions of the Council of Four verged on the dramatic. Differences of opinion clashed with tragic strength. Crisis after crisis arose. An agreement attained as the result of much effort was nul-

lified by a new controversy over a secondary matter, and the struggle was resumed with greater acuteness. On several occasions, the Conference nearly broke up altogether. Mr. Wilson threatened, over the Saar question, to return home. The question of Fiume caused Signor Orlando actually to return to Rome. It required all the prestige and all the skill of M. Clemenceau to gain a partial victory for the French point of view in regard to certain matters. During the discussions over disarmament, the Saar, and reparations, he supported Lloyd George against Wilson, and in the debates over the occupations of the Rhineland, of Poland and Belgium, he supported Wilson against Lloyd George. But, scarcely had an agreement been reached by dint of concessions, bargains, sacrifices, than the German replies were received and threw everything back into the melting-pot, and revived in a passionate form all the difficulties which had been smoothed over. Can we be astonished at the reception given to this treaty, so laboriously compiled in secrecy, a formidable and fragile structure, with its thousand and one complications added to please everyone, whereas actually they pleased no one? Was this the result which the victors had hoped to secure from their success?

"*To those to whom I handed over my task I had said: 'Know what you* will, *and do it. You can!' On November 11th I handed to them an instru-*

ment with which they could have done what they would. They did not know how to make use of it. They have destroyed what I gave them. They missed their opportunity. Their treaty? I did not wish to sign it."

By his voluntary absence from Versailles on the day when the Treaty of Peace was signed ("*On that day, I took refuge in my headquarters at Kreuznach*") the Marshal openly testified that he did not approve of it. Was the conqueror, like Achilles, going to retire to his tent? No. As a loyal and disciplined soldier, he adopted the only course open to a man such as he, well-balanced, wise, master of himself, objective and realistic, and, moreover, covered with glory. He thus demonstrated his conception of duty, and the height to which his patriotism would take him. The great Chief became a great Citizen.

It is no longer a question of preparing for victory by training generals, nor of gaining it by exercising command, but of safeguarding it, and to do that he must support to the fullest of his power those who are responsible. To return to one's job does not imply retiring and doing nothing further, but, on the contrary, holding oneself in readiness to receive and perform new duties.

After the Peace Treaty had been signed, the whole question of clearing up war questions remained to be solved, and it was as difficult as it was

delicate. The Supreme Council of Governments, in order to ensure "the best means of maintaining unanimity of opinion between the Allies, and hence strength and rapidity" in the execution of the military clauses of the treaties, decided in January 1920 to set up the "Allied Military Committee of Versailles," which was to assume the duty of studying, preparing, and carrying out such measures of a military nature as the Governments might require to consider, and, generally speaking, to fill the part of technical adviser to the Governments in matters of an Inter-Allied military nature. Its executive machinery consisted of the military and aerial Control Commissions, with the Allied Armies of Occupation in the territories occupied under the treaties. Its chief was Marshal Foch, assisted by military representatives of the Great Powers: Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan.

By making this appointment, the Allies conferred upon the Marshal a token of their confidence rather than a task worthy of him, for the former *Generalissimo* became subordinate to a new organisation of the Governments—the Ambassadors' Conference.

Once again, what did his rank or function matter to the Marshal? Could he in such a capacity once more serve and watch over the victory? Could he render any service? Yes. He accepted.

Can we, without surprise, see him taking upon

himself the duty of ensuring the execution of a treaty which he would not sign? If not, we do not know him properly. Instead of indulging in recriminations regarding the past, he prefers to make use of the situation as it is at the moment. He was one of the first to criticise the Treaty of Versailles: he knows its faults. He knows that it is not perfect, but now it is an accomplished fact. It may serve as a basis upon which to work, and its value may consist in the results obtained from it. One must therefore devote oneself entirely to making the best application of it. "*I uphold the Versailles Treaty. It is a minimum.*"

When receiving him at the Académie Française, on February 5th, 1920, President Raymond Poincaré addressed to him the following merited eulogy: "It was your task to make war, it was not yours to make peace. You have nevertheless the right to state what form you consider the peace should take, in order effectively to prevent a recurrence of the War. The reports which you wrote as early as November (1918), setting forth the military guarantees which you consider indispensable, bear the imprint of your patriotism and of your experience. Let us hope that the world will never have cause for regretting that it only partially adopted your counsels. What did I say? 'Let us hope?' You are not a man who indulges in aimless wishes and vain regrets. Your realistic mind accepts things as they

actually are, and seeks to use them to the best advantage of our country. Marshal of France, a British Field-Marshal, a soldier respected, not only by all the nations in the Entente and by the European States, but also by our late enemies, President of the Versailles Military Committee, you continue to be for France and for all our friends the most foresighted and the most valuable of advisers."

In the following year, on May 21st, 1921, at the ceremony which took place at the Invalides in commemoration of the centenary of the Emperor, the Marshal, in his "Eulogy of Napoleon," said that, "*truly, duty remains common to all; of greater importance than leading armies to victory is the necessity of serving the Motherland for its greater happiness as each understands it; there is justice to be respected everywhere. Above War comes Peace.*"

This statement is devoid of ambiguity. It explains a point of view, and defines a line of conduct. The Motherland above all else. But the country is a convalescent who needs devoted care, therefore there must be no imprudence, no relapse. In order that it may recover, it must regain its resources; its confidence must be restored; it must be surrounded by calm and care.

Public opinion, so frequently alarmed by recollections of the recent War, is irritated by the least

complication, becomes agitated and fearful.

The Marshal possesses experience. His common sense is the best remedy. "*In five years' time, the position will be unchanged. Reparations and its problems will not be much nearer a solution. The chief thing is to be on the Rhine. We had to go there; I went. After that we can hold the position while they argue. . . . If I am needed, they will only have to call me.*"

In Eastern Europe the situation suddenly becomes aggravated. The Bolsheviks are making rapid progress. They are on the point of threatening Warsaw. The Poles plead for help; all eyes are turned on the Marshal.

"*Send Weygand there first. He will do everything that I should do. . . . And later, if that is not enough, there will still be time for me to go myself.*" It was, in fact, sufficient. The victory of Warsaw saved Poland and Europe.

But the danger, when banished from one point, re-appeared at another. The relations between France and Germany became so strained that the possibility of war was discussed in all quarters.

One morning in 1922, the Marshal found in his post a letter from New Zealand: "M. le Maréchal —à Berlin!" He merely grumbled: "*To Berlin? Yes . . . and what then? . . . Go to Berlin? How? . . . Supposing that we go there. . . . We shall have to come back again, and what then?*"

He had previously held the same views when, for the first time, the Ruhr occupation had been discussed. "*We will go to the Ruhr. Right. What next? Are we to stay there? No. Well then! What is the good of that? What advantage will it be to us? Do not content yourself with words, unless you wish to be disappointed.*"

He was the only man who could argue thus without incurring the risk of being accused of lack of courage.

But, early in 1923, relations between France and Germany became extremely strained. The position was impossible, and a solution was essential. The Reparations Commission having reported that Germany was voluntarily in default in regard to coal deliveries, the sanctions provided for in the Versailles Treaty could be put into operation. The French Government decided to seize the chief German coal-field. "*In the present disorganisation of Europe, France is the only orderly country. It is enough for her to know her own will, and to follow it.*"

This occupation was regarded as being of an essentially economic character; the securing of a pledge. The Army was only concerned in it so far as its co-operation was necessary to ensure success.

The situation, delicate enough in itself, was rendered even more embarrassing by complications of a political nature, both at home and abroad. On the

one hand, England would not associate with us. "*The policy of releasing the pressure is of no use to anyone, neither to those who are released, of course, nor to others.*" On the other hand, personal factors entered into the question of the management of the scheme, and the course of action proposed by the Marshal was not adopted.

But as from the outset matters took a wrong turn, General Weygand was despatched to the Ruhr on a mission with the Minister of Public Works. "*Good! Once more we are sent to patch matters up.*" From the reports brought back by his Chief of Staff, the Marshal particularly noted this point: "*In two days we shall have two railway lines. We may be able to manage.*" In the prevailing anxiety in regard to the fate of the troops, this was the exact and useful kind of information which he liked. Knowing that, "*one knows what is to be done.*"

It was done so well that soon the Marshal was able to report: "*The battle is ended.*" But once the danger was averted, during one of those conferences which had for weeks been held at the Quai d'Orsay in regard to this occupation, and General Weygand, having been thanked for his devotion to duty, began to find the proceedings tedious, the Marshal dissuaded him from showing signs of revolt: "*No, no! They know quite well that they can count on your devotion. . . .*" But he decided

to have nothing further to do with the matter. "*I am acting as an observer. You have no further need of me. You can recall me when things go wrong.*"

During the preceding weeks, his conscience had been in the throes of an internal struggle. He had already found himself in similar (but even more serious) circumstances to those he was in when the Peace Treaty was signed. The rule which he had previously formulated for himself, and which he had adopted in the latter case, once more served as his line of policy. Opposed to useless actions as he was to playing to the gallery or to any form of self-advertisement, he refrained from noisy and ill-advised protests. He was not concerned with the opinion of the Press, but with that of his own conscience; he disregarded the verdict of popular opinion, but thought of that of history. He subordinated his own interests to those of his country, and, at the moment of action, allowed himself to be neither urged on nor held back by any of those wretched susceptibilities the consequences of which are sometimes so terrible when important matters are at stake. He was guided by his reason, not by his sensitiveness. His patriotism and his greatness of mind explain what might be taken for feebleness or indifference. He has given proof of his civic courage. A few months passed. The situation improved so little that, in October 1923, nothing less than a fradulent bankruptcy on the part of Ger-

many, involving its breaking up, could be foreseen. "*That would provide security for us, perhaps, but it would give us no reparations. You remember my reply when I assumed command of the armies in 1918?* 'There are the Channel ports and Paris. Which are you going to defend—the ports or Paris?' '*Both. I shall let nothing go; nothing must be let go!' It is the same thing. Security? That is peace. Very well. But without reparations—then France is ruined. She is weakened by her losses of men, drained by a crushing debt, by the interest she has to pay; and she has no resources, neither roads, nor canals, nor communications—nothing. She is faced by a country which has become bankrupt, with no domestic debt, and which has lost none of her economic resources. . . . I will let nothing go; I insist there is nothing to let go!*" And, as if talking to himself, he added: "*To seek security, when one has gained the victory! To let the decisive moment pass!*"

The following month the *coup d'état* which Ludendorff tried at Munich, although unsuccessful, and above all, the return of the Crown Prince to Germany, suddenly made the international situation particularly delicate. England, at the time confronted with the most serious domestic difficulties, preferred not to be aware of the danger which threatened on the Continent. The British Prime Minister, in one of his speeches, revealed his

lack of confidence in the stability of the Entente Cordiale. We replied rather stiffly. "*What use are these oratorical manifestations?*" said the Marshal. "*Platform diplomacy is bad diplomacy. Nations are set one against the other. . . . And then nothing. . . .*"

Public opinion is once more alarmed. The uneasiness becomes widespread. An unreasoning fear of everything—of war, of the German aerial forces, and of the German chemical industry—becomes the obsession of all classes, spreads, converts the most reliable minds, and develops unchecked. "*They are words! War? What war? With whom? Where? When? How? What does it all mean? One must know what one is saying and not repeat things without trying to understand them; and besides, one should not always accuse others if things go wrong.*"

Rather than criticise, indulge in recriminations and lamentations, and take fright, it is better to examine one's conscience, look danger in the face, and make the necessary arrangements. Is the latter course so difficult that nobody is willing to adopt it? "*I have always considered that by doing what was necessary one obtained results. . . . But it must be done. When things go wrong, it is because there is a weakness somewhere. Well! You must seek out those weaknesses and remedy them. It is not the fault of others that things go wrong. Do*

what you have to do. People who do not stir, who do nothing, come to nothing. If you do nothing, do you think your work will do itself? Get on with it. I promise you that you will succeed. But get on with it properly."

Truly, the Marshal's manner has undergone no change, although his imperative commands of earlier days have been replaced by advice full of wisdom and moderation. Circumstances have changed, and the Marshal has had to adapt himself to them. His object is unchanged. His plan? To defend and make the most of the fruits of victory. In that respect his methods remain the same; they are incapable of variation. It is necessary to have a programme, and to apply it forcefully; to secure information, not to waste one's forces; to know what one wills, and to get it.

"*We have won the War, but we have not yet won the Peace. We must continue with energy, ardour, zeal, hard work . . . with still greater verve. If we have not yet succeeded, it is because we have not worked hard enough. It is not sufficient to observe faults which are present; one must look farther afield, more deeply, until one finds what one wills, and it will be found.*"

Yes, if we take into account the changed conditions in which we have been placed by the recent catastrophe, the consequences of which we are still experiencing, "*I ask myself how people who have*

seen the War and its upheavals, old States such as Russia and Austria, empires which are crumbling away and are vanishing; new States such as Czechoslovakia or Poland which are arising and succeed in surviving—how can they, after all these examples, still believe in the methods of former times?"

And not only is it the political situation which has undergone change, but also daily life. "*The cost of living is four times as much. Things will never revert to their former condition. How can one arrange one's future without taking this fact into account? We are building on old foundations. It is like fixing an engine on to a stage coach. You will not make a motor-car in that way!*"

Unfortunately, that is how the majority of everyday problems are solved, while to their study should really be brought a new outlook which alone can furnish fresh methods which are in harmony with present conditions.

"*We shall arrive at this paradoxical condition—that Germany is forming cadres, and is looking for a new form of organisation suitable to the needs of future wars. We, on the other hand, who maintain an army, we are about to extend it on ready-made models which ought to be scrapped.*"

Nevertheless, while adapting oneself to new conditions, there should be no question of making a clean sweep with the past. Only common sense can hold the balance between these two extremes. The

old adage, "Si vis pacem para bellum," still holds good. The Marshal, who had believed in it all his life, still believes in it.

"*So long as we are in the Rhineland, and on the Rhine at Mayence, our safety is guaranteed by the strength of the obstacle and also by the fact that the struggle, if it came to war, would take place in Germany, and would extend its field of devastation to the very heart of the country.*

"*But it is only a security for a limited period. We must foresee and make preparations for the moment when we evacuate the Rhine. By that time, to compensate for the smaller numbers of our population, we must have a solid frontier, and, in the absence of natural obstacles, which do not exist, we must provide powerful fortifications. Such works require much time, and are expensive. Consequently, they should be undertaken without delay. And, similarly, our military organisation must be reconstituted in an economical manner, while ensuring that it can be expanded so as to become sufficiently powerful to defeat an invasion. To be respected, we must possess the means of ensuring respect—that is to say, we must be strong. The prestige of victory only lasts for a certain time. We should therefore at once become active.*"

When the Marshal found himself between the two currents directing public opinion, Locarno and Versailles, his choice was made up, but without

narrow-mindedness or obstinacy; he said: "*Locarno? We must be on our guard. But that is no reason for doing nothing in this direction. We cannot spend our lives looking at one another like two china dogs. I am on the side of the peacemakers, but not of the pacifists.*"

His views on general disarmament are inspired by the same ideas: "*Certainly, so long as moral disarmament precedes material disarmament. War cannot be prevented simply by confiscating the weapons of the warlike nations: they will always find means of replacing them. To-day, to defend France and prevent a recurrence of 1914, we certainly hold the Rhine. But, on the day of its evacuation, I ask myself how far the organisations which will replace our supervisory agents will be able to keep an eye on the Germans and prevent them from re-arming.*

"*I do not believe that the present generation will see another war such as that which has just finished, but it is possible that we shall see smaller ones, and, above all, a general unrest. . . . No one wants any longer this abominable thing which the War was. If anyone tried to start it again, every nation would rise against him, and in greater numbers still than in 1914. It is to prevent that that we made the Treaty of Versailles. No, no more wars; it is too dreadful.*"

Now, to avoid the recurrence of a similar catas-

trophe, as well as to ensure the effects of victory, there can be only one method: "*During the War, union has been our strength. It was the union between all the Allies which saved us. The system is a good one, and bears the recommendation of success. Let us remain united during peace and we shall overcome all difficulties in the same manner.*"

Such is the gospel which he intends to preach in future with all the authority to which his past entitles him.

In 1921, at the invitation of the *Anciens Combattants*, he attended the annual convention of the American Legion at Kansas City. For two months he traversed in all directions the huge territory of the United States, and at each stopping-place, when he addressed the crowds who had come to greet him, he dwelt on the three following topics:

A hymn of gratitude: "*By your heroism you have secured victory, and enabled your Governments to achieve the peace which they desired.*"

A call to unity: "*Let us remain united as we were on the battlefield, in order that this peace may be consolidated and extended.*"

An exhortation to work: "*Work, because by so doing the mind becomes more supple, and because one must keep on working, to be always equal to one's task.*"

The Marshal was able to win the hearts of his audiences with these simple words.

Far from seeking self-aggrandisement, he only thought of his object—that of making his journey useful from the French point of view, and to lead the Americans to feel in regard to us those brotherly and generous sentiments which caused them to fight so heroically side by side with us. Without pride, as was his wont, but conscious nevertheless of the results he had achieved, he replied on his return to those who were boasting of his success: "*Yes . . . I do not think we did too badly.*"

In the eyes of the Americans, the Marshal was "The greatest Chief of the greatest Army in the world." In the eyes of the Marshal the Americans were the people who always achieved results. For both, these reasons formed sufficient grounds for mutual friendship.

The Americans have annexed the Marshal as one of their great men. His simplicity pleased them, while they appreciated his frankness and loyalty. They respected him for his integrity and clean living. They admit his superiority, because it bears the hall-mark of success, the most important factor to their way of thinking, and one which they hold in the greatest esteem. They see themselves reflected in him because he is a "self-made man," who has succeeded by dint of will-power, tenacity, perseverance. They gladly listen to him, feeling as they do his sympathy for the objects at which they

are aiming as well as for the motives which inspire their actions.

Finally, they admit him to be a Chief who was able to lead to victory the army which they entrusted to him.

For his own part, the Marshal is touched by the admiration which the Americans have for him and which he gladly reciprocates. No doubt he sometimes smiles at their exuberance, but he regards them benevolently because they act, because they are constructive, because they "*get things done.*" Like them, he does not like dry, negative, and destructive irony. Finally, he does not disguise his lively sympathy for their spirit of enterprise, nor a certain admiration for their methods, which tend to develop character rather than intelligence. "*Look at the young Americans,*" he says, speaking of their young people, "*they are vigorous, physically and morally. Their education is efficient, and at the age of twenty they are sent out into the world. If they do not know, they learn, they work, they make their way. One can only succeed by willing to.*"

From that time onwards, the relations between the Marshal and the Americans have been characterised by the warmest cordiality.

In May 1922, the King of England went to France to visit the front-line cemeteries. The Marshal met him at Nôtre-Dame de Lorette. The interview was cordial, although somewhat brief and

official in character. They inspected the guard of honour; some wreaths were laid; a minute's silence. The sky is overcast, the wind is blowing, and it is bitterly cold. The rows of white crosses are dreadfully sad to look upon. They proceed to Vimy Ridge. The ground is still pitted with shell-holes. They stumble over rusty iron and tree-stumps. At the foot of the ridge stretches a wide vista of plain, the limits of which are lost in the mist. "*What a position. . . . But what a disappointment for the Germans, what a loss! After holding Vimy, after having been at the gates of the capital, after having theatened it with their guns, and after having been forced to relax their grip and return home beaten. . . . What would have becn said if we had been at the gates of Berlin and had returned empty-handed?*" And, as they were separating, when the King warmly shakes the Marshal's hand, the latter replies: "*Always friends, Sire, for the same reasons and the same cause.*"

In October 1922, the Marshal went to Alba-Julia to attend the coronation of the Roumanian sovereigns, and on the following day he returned with them to Bucharest.

Six months later, in 1923, he visited Poland and Czechoslovakia. At Warsaw, he received the honour of being made a Marshal of Poland. At Caslav, the 21st Infantry Regiment made him its honorary colonel, and adopted his name.

"Poland? In 1918 I had declared that it was a myth. I did not think that it could continue to exist. I have now entirely changed my mind. It is a nation which has a vitality and a strength which I admire. They have been able to drive the Germans out of their country, from Posnania, absolutely and completely. And then they have children, swarms of children. Soon they will be as numerous as we ourselves. If they can hold out for fifteen or twenty years, the new generation will be a power."

This, on his return from his journey in Poland; full of confidence in this young and vigorous country, the Marshal watches with sympathy its efforts at organisation. He gives Poland his firm support.

One afternoon a Polish mission had come to his office. He spoke to them of the German danger and of the Russian danger. His voice became unusually emphatic. He spoke very loudly, emphasising his words in a very distinct manner and with an impressive slowness, full of authority and certainty. Broken by periods of silence, his sentences fell, amid the general silence, like *swords into a scale*. The Polish officers listened with their ears, their eyes, their intelligence, their hearts. They understood French—but only just! But they grasped perfectly all that was said, so much conviction and persuasion was there in the Marshal's words. Those who were listening to him literally drank in his

words, and, when he had finished, the result was as if they had been imbibing spirits—spirits from their home land, which, reminding them of their own country, would, in its defence, have kindled in them new and confident energy.

On June 4th, 1923, at Abbeville, he presided at the unveiling of the monument to the fallen, a Franco-British ceremony. Lord Cavan, Chief of the General Staff, represented the Army of our Allies, whose headquarters had been in this town during the War.

The Entente had been somewhat impaired during recent diplomatic discussions. The Press had not concealed any of the difficulties. Nevertheless, when announced in an authoritative manner, it is liable to jeopardise seriously relations which are already strained. To profess ignorance of them is a sign of weakness. It is a delicate matter to speak of them. But silence would be a mistake. A doubt would be an admission; a regret would be worse.

After the speeches had been made, the Marshal leads Lord Cavan by the arm to the monument. "*Let us show our dead that we remain united.*"

In January 1926, when Cardinal Mercier died, he made a special point of attending his funeral.

Belgium had decided to treat the funeral of her eminent prelate as a national ceremony. The body of the Cardinal was therefore taken from Malines to Brussels, and the ceremony commenced at the

Gare du Nord. The Marshal was there, at the head of the foreign representatives, when the King, upon his own arrival, sent for him. "The whole nation is very grateful to you for having come to attend the funeral of Cardinal Mercier." "*Sire, there are two individuals who may be regarded as typifying the resistance of Belgium: your Majesty on the one side of the barricade, and Cardinal Mercier on the other. . . . I have come to testify to my most respectful admiration for the one who has been the first to pass beyond, for when it comes to the turn of the other, I shall not be there!*" "Ah! one never knows." "*I do.*"

Before leaving Brussels, he remarked to a Minister: "*I represent the past: during that past, we all of us did what we could for our nation, and we did not do too badly. It is for you to continue the task, you who represent the future. In any case, as long as I live, you may count on me to be of service to Belgium, for whom I have a warm corner in my heart.*"

So far as France, too, is concerned, he is impelled by the same motives. He does not wish the War to be forgotten, still less the lesson which it taught us. The memory of those who died for their country has become the origin of something akin to a religion, whose ceremonies take place in a different town every Sunday. The proudest cities and the humblest market towns alike, each in their turn

dedicate a monument to their dead. Most of them, in order that their pious commemoration may be accompanied by fitting pomp, endeavour to arrange for the principal part in the ceremony to be performed by some leader who was associated with our victory, and many of them, as is natural, invite the Marshal to be present.

"*We must in every town erect a monument to the dead, otherwise in fifty years' time no one will remember them. It should be a monument on the principal square, and every time the troops go by, they should march past it with military honours. On public holidays, the troops should be reviewed there. The children will know it, and will ask why it is there. . . . They must remember.*"

In the speeches which he makes when he unveils these monuments, he usually commences with a reference to the War, recalling the tragic moments of the struggle, and demonstrates how all these difficulties were overcome thanks to the unity of those who took part in it as well as to their heroism. And every time he concludes by eulogising the dead: "*Let us hearken once more to the dead, entombed in glory, when they say to us, in words which carry the prestige of victory and the authority of sacrifice: 'In order to ensure the safety of our homes and the greatness of our country, we stood firm and remained devoted and steadfast unto death.' In times of peace, the same strength*

will bring you victory, if you keep your gaze fixed on the same goal—France above all else. . . . Sleep in peace, heroic dead; you live in our memories, and serve as an example to us."

Only in this most exalted and general manner does he refer to post-War problems; he never touches upon political controversies. "*That is not in my province.*" He holds himself strictly aloof from matters of this kind.

At a time when all were seeking new ways in which to demonstrate their gratitude to him, various departments offered to make him their parliamentary representative, but he refused. "*After the War, I was offered a seat as Senator, first of all by the department of the Moselle, and then by Finistère, but I declined.*"

He belongs to that generation of officers who entered the Army at the period which followed our defeat by the Germans, and who devoted their whole career to that idea of revenge for which all prepared and which he, more fortunate, was able to accomplish. These officers were forbidden both by tradition and law to intervene in any way in political matters. The Marshal had never even thought of breaking this rule. He was not encouraged to, but rather the contrary, by the events in which he had taken part, either as a witness or as an actor, during his career.

"*I shall not go in for that kind of thing, if I am*

expected to do nothing." But what could he do politically? A politician does not defend principles, but electoral interests: he has to become interested in party quarrels, the squabbles of rival factions. Moreover, if he is to remain in Parliament, he has to seek re-election. He has to canvass the electors, and incur the risk of being beaten at the poll. But even if Foch could have been made a permanent Senator, as is the practice in certain countries, his decision would have been the same. When he accepts a duty, he considers it his duty to carry it to completion. He would not be able to spare the time. "*I have something else to do than to speak after three hundred other people. . . . And then it might not lead to anything being done. . . .*"

To be unable to act! The mere idea of it repels him. Rightly or wrongly, this is his chief grievance against the politicians: "*The worst of it is that they are all infected by the Parliamentary virus. . . . They are no longer capable of seeing what they are doing. Nevertheless they are intelligent men, some of them very intelligent. But they can do nothing but talk. They are wonderfully clever at saying what should be done, and then they don't do it. Words are useful for the transmission of ideas but that is not enough: action is necessary.*"

As for the Marshal, he makes use of every opportunity. When the autonomist movement was

causing great unrest in Alsace, he at once decided to visit Strasbourg, Mulhouse, and Colmar, to take a principal part in the local festivities, musical or gymnastic competitions, and military meetings. Everyone turned out in his honour; crowds assembled to see and listen to him. "*I have faith in Alsace, it is a splendid country. It will overcome its difficulties. At this time, when we are doing our utmost in the interests of peace, the re-united family of the Mother Country should work together in harmony. May Alsace, more truly French than the rest through having experienced the pangs of separation, play her leading part in this work. Alsace is our advance guard. It should have confidence in the main body of the Army which follows, ready to come to its support and defence as it has always done.*"

He is, indeed, entitled to speak on behalf of France. He has taken care not to become attached to any party, no matter which. The servant of the nation, he loyally supports the elected and responsible government. But this does not debar him, on occasion, from speaking with a truly military candour. "*I am not asked to express my opinion, but I give it, all the same, even if I put my foot in it.*" But he does not appeal to public opinion for support. His aim is not to cause panic, but to accomplish his purpose. To do that, he makes no use of useless speeches or theatrical gestures, but of

memoranda, precise, well-founded, compiled with as much clarity as firmness, and addressed to those who are concerned.

He thus abstains from discussions as well as from quarrels. Some people fail to understand him. "What does the Marshal think of the way things are shaping? What does he say when he sees what is being done with the victory? He can hardly be pleased!" "*No, of course I am not pleased. But can it not be remedied? We should do something.*"

By this method he does not try to pander to popular passion.

But, nevertheless, in order to satisfy the malcontents, he cannot place himself once more at the head of armies and again go to war. Others might do it, possibly, because a conqueror, if he is to continue his career, must go on conquering. But what catastrophes may he not thus bring to pass? Foch was a deliverer, not a conqueror. He did not attempt to snatch an emperor's robes from the materials of his victory. He is not willing to involve his country in all manner of dangers so that he may add to his own fame. He knows too much for that! If the victor of the present day is too austere in his bearing, who shall blame him?

He carries himself loftily, proudly, but not arrogantly, since he is neither surprised nor perturbed by his power, and because, certain of his own strength, he does not attempt to display it;

inspiring respect, even dread, but not hatred, because his victory is loyal, his severity just, his domination generous; his very appearance reassuring by reason of his coolness, his mastery over himself; sturdy in stature, a robust and healthy physique, a confident gait, masterful gesture, a strong face illuminated by vital and burning eyes; the victor after his victory is like a lion at rest, but not "burdened by his years and lamenting his former deeds of valour."

He has nothing to regret. His glory, like his life, is immune from criticism. He has retained all his strength, maintained his authority, asserted his character. His task is completed, firmly, powerfully, harmoniously. Nothing remains which he can add to it. Peace restored, the civil power reestablished, the most serious problems partly solved, he is now able to withdraw from public affairs.

However, still seeking an outlet for his activities, ever obsessed by the desire for knowledge, he begins to travel. The country which most attracts him is a young one, in which people are working hard, and with splendid results—Morocco. He goes there enthusiastically: he returns with this idea: *"Ah! If I were twenty, I would go to Morocco, there is something there to work for. There is much to be done, and the chance of doing something worth while. In our colonies, there is more scope*

than in the old country, where we trample on each other and are jostled without being able to forge ahead. . . . If I had my life to live all over again, I should not trouble about words, I should go where the deeds are done, and you would see results."

Napoleon did not think it beneath him to write to one of his Ministers about the building of houses for work-people: "Men are not truly great unless they leave behind them tangible reminders of their work." As the result of a journey in his little home district in the Pyrenees, Foch returned with various schemes: one to utilise the water-power in the neighbourhood of Saint-Gaudens for the generation of electricity and thus to increase the comfort of his fellow-townsmen; the second to enlarge the little seminary of Polignan. These problems have to be solved. He takes them in hand with great energy, studies estimates, visits the work, goes into the question of future developments and of possible improvements. Of course, funds are needed: he spares no effort to find them. "*I should like to leave, after my death, things which are solid and enduring. If I have rendered any services, I should like to make use of them in their turn, to help me to do good.*"

After his final tasks come the most important thought of all. He does not fear death: "*Exactly, my friend: it is the only thing of which one can be certain. It has to be faced some day. The chief*

thing is to be prepared for it. One should not be alarmed by the thought of it."

Then, turning aside from men and things, rising superior to trivial concerns and human vanities, without regret, without desire, remembering the past, with no need for self reproach, conscious that his life has been well-spent, and possessing that peace of heart which can come only from a purpose achieved, a task fulfilled, he undertakes a final work, a historical thesis in which he can for the last time bear witness to his religious and patriotic ideals; he writes a commentary on the life of Joan of Arc.

By his unselfishness and his patriotism, his devotion to the public interests, the firmness of his convictions, the wisdom of his attitude, and, more than all, by this extraordinary serenity which raised him above the level of men and circumstances, the Marshal has been able to complete the volume of his life with the only page worthy of him, by leaving as his last memorial a final example of strength of will and greatness of mind.

CONCLUSION

"ANYONE CAN DO AS MUCH"

While listening to Marshal Foch, it was no call of clarion nor fanfare of war that I heard, but appeals to the reason, the inculcation of method, the glorification of work and will, a moral lesson.

No doubt the *Generalisimo* of the Allied Armies, victor in this six months' battle that swept from Doullens to Rethondes, is before all else a leader. And to lead to victory more than four million troops, different in race, though equal in courage, to induce them to endure heroically every possible torture of mind and body, to make them "*climb that long, infernal road that is modern war,*" to maintain their morale, and to apply the full effect of that enormous mass, multiplied as it was by tremendous provision of war material and the unparalleled resources of modern invention—that demanded a leader of uncommon range! Far from resembling the stage conception of a general with his glittering exterior, he was the representative of a new order.

He was never seen prancing in front of his troops arrayed in battle order, but day and night his motor-car traversed the highways along a front

more than four hundred kilometres in extent. It was not from a commanding height, field-glasses in hand, surrounded by a numerous and resplendent Staff, that he gave the order for the critical attack, but in his office with the one and only Weygand, standing in front of an enormous map hung on the wall, by means of innumerable telephone messages over a period of many weeks.

What led him to the Supreme Command was not birth or intrigue or chance, but merit. If events favoured him, it was only giving him the chance of displaying his full powers. If he always rode the high tide of circumstances, it was only because he had prepared himself for it all his life.

What distinguished him were his long preparations, his dogged labour, his coolness and his judgment, his "active tenacity," his unprejudiced and flexible intelligence, his mastery of himself, his practice of simplification and his wide view of a situation as a whole, the application of method by energy, and, above all, his determination to achieve his aims, which was stronger than all the thousands of wills opposed to his own.

His success was not the result of accident fortunately exploited, but the fruit of persevering endurance. The victor owes his success to his human qualities—patiently, carefully, and deliberately acquired.

The leader has earned our gratitude, but the

man extorts our admiration. The one gave us the victory; the other leaves us an example.

"*That is what I have done; it has been successful. Anyone can do the same.*" Without pride or boastfulness, his deeds endowing his voice with an unquestionable authority, the Marshal encourages us: "*Do as I have done. When a man of ordinary capacity—yes, I repeat, of ordinary capacity—concentrates all his faculties and all his means on the attainment of a single purpose, by working hard and without being diverted from his goal, he is bound to attain it. To do that, certain conditions are essential. To be strong, he must be objective, and when I say that, I mean that if he would act he must not turn his gaze inwards and lose himself in his imagination. It is only deeds which count, and one must concentrate on their accomplishment. As for methods of ensuring success, I know none which are absolute. I have acted in such and such a manner: if I had it to do again, I might perhaps act differently. The important thing is to have an object, a plan, and a method; it is to know what one* wills *and to do it; it is to act in such a way as to obtain results. But it is necessary to have learned how to think, by work and reflection. It is essential to be prepared and to continue to the end: it is necessary to reach one's goal.*"

Of course, he is too modest; there was also the divine afflatus, inspiration, *le coup de vent*—what-

ever it is that we call genius and that endows the application of these rules with a marvellous impetus.

If we cannot all aspire to reach the heights to which the Marshal attained, we ought all, as befits a man, strive to raise ourselves. And among us, especially, that effort should appeal to the "Children of Victory," who, through the chaos in which they were born, find themselves bewildered and need a guiding star. Already their craving for pleasure begins to pall. Many of them feel the necessity for discipline. Words no longer suffice them: they demand realities and achievements. May they be men of action that France may live. May they undertake great tasks, and work in earnest.

For such a purpose, they could not find a sounder guide or a better model than the Marshal.

Of that I am profoundly convinced, after undergoing his influence, and knowing all that I owe to him. So I have sought, in all singleness of purpose, to show him as I saw him and understood him—not to increase his glory, to which I can add nothing, but to make him better known, and therefore better loved. Following his own maxim, I have *willed* to perform a useful work and achieve an object. If I have been able to give anyone the desire and the guidance to follow his example, I shall have accomplished my purpose while serving his memory.

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